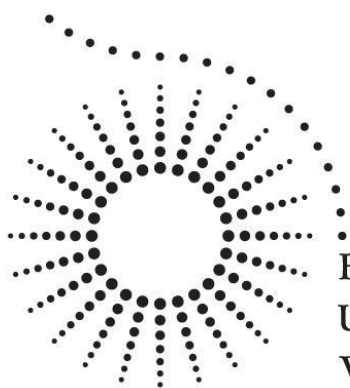


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Master's Thesis



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Labour Migration of the Hawan Ha Clan Mongghul to Aksu in Xinjiang

Institute of South and Central Asia

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I affirm that I wrote my master's thesis independently and used only the sources cited. I agree that this work can be borrowed publicly.

In Prague

Ha Mingzong

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Thesis title: Labour Migration of the Hawan Ha Clan Mongghul to Aksu in Xinjiang

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Abstract: The current work focuses on the ongoing labour migration of the Mongghul Ha Clan from Hawan, Gansu Province to Aksu in southern Xinjiang. It presents the motivation for the migration, and examines the social, economic and cultural changes the migration has catalyzed. Impacts on local Uyghur engendered by in-migrants are discussed. The work also features an overview and a generalization of the contemporary labour migration in China and Xinjiang in particular. Interviews with migrants are transcribed in Mongghul and translated to English and serve as an important source for the work.

Keywords: *Bingtuan*,¹ enclaves, genealogy, Ha Clan,² Hawan, labour migration, Mongghul, Monguor, oral history, Tu, social transformation, cultural change

Název práce: Pracovní migrace mongghulského rodu Ha z Hawanu do Aksu, Xinjiang

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Abstrakt: Tato práce se soustředí na probíhající pracovní migraci Mongghulského rodu Ha z Hawanu v provincii Gansu do Aksu v jižním Xinjangu. Práce představuje důvody k migraci, zároveň zkoumá sociální, ekonomické a kulturní změny, které způsobila migrace. Vyvolané vlivy na místní Uyghury jsou probírány. Práce také obsahuje přehled a zobecnění současné pracovní migrace v Číně, zejména v Xinjangu. Rozhovory s migranty jsou přepsány v mongghulštině a přeloženy do angličtiny a slouží jako důležitý zdroj pro tuto práci.

¹ Bingtuan 兵团: military turned agricultural settlements, built by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC).

² Clan: a group of people sharing a common surname and a common genealogy.

Klíčová slova: *Bingtuan*, Hawan, kulturní změna, rod Ha, rodinná kronika, pracovní migrace, Mongghul, Monguor, orální historie, Tu, sociální transformace

0 Introduction

0.1 Aim and motivation

This work continues the author's bachelor's thesis dealing with the historical migration of Hawan Ha Clan Mongghul, currently residing in Hawan 哈湾 Village, Tiantang 天堂 Township, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County 天祝藏族自治县, Gansu 甘肃 Province, China. The present work focuses on the ongoing labour migration of clan members to other regions, especially to Aksu Prefecture 阿克苏地区, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region 新疆维吾尔自治区. This work is largely based on interviews conducted with clan migrants, their family members, including those left behind, and government officials. General facts and trends of the migration are also elicited from literature.

This topic is of significance because it deals with an important moment in the history of the author's family and clan - his immediate family members and closest relatives have all left Hawan, where they have lived for nearly a century, for new, unfamiliar places like Aksu that they believe would provide better economic and social opportunities. In the early twentieth century, an important part of the focus clan left the main body of Mongghul in Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County 互助土族自治县 in Qinghai 青海 Province for a new location in Hawan in Gansu Province, which was in many aspects similar to Huzhu, and continued a traditional life preserving Mongghul language and culture. This time, in the twenty-first century, a large portion of Hawan Mongghul are moving to a place far from their cultural centre and language environment, where they are an insignificant minority among various ethnic groups. Among other impacts, the rapid loss of native language and traditional culture is the most prominent.

This study of the resettlement of non-Han ethnic group from the Gansu-Qinghai area in Xinjiang serves as a case study and contributes to the broader study of various ethnic peoples immigrating to Xinjiang in recent years. Aksu, the destination of Ha Clan

migrants, is especially intriguing because of Aksu's dramatic transformation from an arid Gobi desert to 'the home of China's fruits', and partly also because of social instability that worries many.

This work attempts to achieve these following goals:

1) to present the economic, social, environmental and political factors that led to the relocation of the focused people from their home area to an unfamiliar place inhabited predominantly by Uyghur;

2) to better understand why Aksu has become the destination of choice for the Hawan Ha clan Mongghul;

3) to explore how the migrants settled and integrated, and how migration has benefitted them;

4) to learn what forms of cultural change migration has encouraged;

5) to understand how the out-migration has impacted the area of origin and the nature of contacts migrants maintain with their home-place;

6) and to better understand what impacts such migrations have on the destination and its population.

This work is thus a continued study of the Mongghul Ha Clan in the narrow sense, and in a wider sense it endeavors to better elucidate the current work migration issue in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as a whole.

0.2 Outline

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. The aim and motivation, and outline of the work are presented in the introduction. The introduction also presents a literature review and an overview on migration in China. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the Monggul Ha Clan historical migration beginning with the general history of the Mongghul ethnicity as a whole by presenting disputed

theories related to Mongghul origins. I propose a hypothetical migration route of the Mongghul Ha Clan based on historical documents and data including interviews collected during fieldwork. This chapter gives an overall look of who the discussed people of this work are. Chapter 2 describes the living conditions in the people's home-region that encouraged the migration including living standard, way of life, job opportunities, income, and education. Chapter 3 goes on to discuss the factors contributing to the clan's initial relocation. This chapter includes the perceived advantages of the destination area, while details the migration process and the early life of the first migrants/movers. This chapter also addresses the intensification of the clan's movement to Aksu by presenting the experiences of Sengzhang, the person responsible. Chapter 4 describes the life of migrant workers in the destination area. Type of work activities and material conditions of the migrants are presented. Chapter 5 of this work focuses on culture changes of the migrants as manifested by changes in farming style, language, food, clothing, weddings, funerals, festivals, and religious beliefs. Chapter 6 of the work shifts its focus to the impacts in-migration has brought to the local Uyghur people. Chapter 7 generalizes about labour migration to Xinjiang and in China as a whole. The conclusion summarizes the results of this work including its contribution to the study of the Mongghul's history and current migration, while also raising questions for further research. Lastly, this work includes a section devoted to five interviews conducted by the author during fieldwork. Each interview focuses on one specific aspect of the migration. Those interviewed were the primary consultants for this work.

0.3 Literature review

Publications on migration to Xinjiang and ethnic relations of the region were rare before the 1990s. However, even in the 1990s, when there was an increased interest in ethnicity in China, Gladney (1996) argues that it was only just beginning to be seen in the study of migration. Such studies were published in China, including *Xinjiang Minzu Guanxi Yanjiu* 新疆民族关系研究 [*Ethnic Relations in Xinjiang*] (Yin and Mao, 1996), and *Shichang Jingji Tiaojianxia Xinjiang Minzu Guanxi Duce Yanjiu* 市场经济条件下

新疆民族关系的对策研究 [*Countermeasures on Ethnic Relations in Xinjiang under the Market Economy*] (Guo, 1998). In the last decade, there have been quite a few publications on internal migration in China, and the challenges of ethnic relations. Most such works published outside China have also included chapters on such issues in Xinjiang, e.g., *Contemporary Minority Migration Education and Ethnicity in China* and *China's Minorities on the Move: Selected Case Studies* (Iredale et al., 2001 and 2003 respectively). Numerous articles on the topics discussed have been published, both in China and elsewhere, in the last decade as well, for example, *Hukou and Non-Hukou Migrations in China: Comparisons and Contrasts* (Chan et. al., 1999), *Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi* (Howell and Fan, 2011), *Population Changes in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (1949-1984)* (Yuan, 1990), and *Uyghur Mobilization in Xinjiang since 1990: What are the Causes?* (Kristensen, 2009)

This work draws on some of these publications mentioned as well as *Xinjiang Nanjiang Diqu Hanzu Yimin Ji Minzu Guanxi Yanjiu* 新疆南疆地区汉族移民及民族关系研究 [*Han Chinese Migration and Ethnic Relations in Southern Xinjiang*] (Li, 2010), a research study on Han Chinese migration in Aksu Region.

It is important to comment on the reliability of such information. Firstly, Xinjiang is a highly sensitive region in China, and researchers' access to the province has been, to a great extent, restricted and controlled, especially if their research touched on such issues as ethnic relations and religious issues (Yee, 2003). Secondly, facts and figures used might have been distorted due to political and social considerations. This explains the limited number of in-depth field studies carried out by foreign scholars. Thirdly, publications from China may be extremely one-dimensional. Keeping these potential shortcomings in mind, previous publications have been used only for background information in this work, which is based largely on interviews I conducted with closely related consultants and personal experiences.

For the historical part of the migration, such records as the local annals, such as Annals of Xining and Gansu, and family genealogies as well as oral history are used.

0.4 Contemporary migration in China

Internal mobility has been a feature throughout China's history that was encouraged by natural disasters, wars, criminal deportations, population pressure, opening up new areas, and so on. Since the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 until the late 1970s, mobility in China came to be under various limits due to state planning and centralized control, for example, the official household/residence registration system, or *hukou*, which requires that those who want to move to another place must obtain official permission, and the food ration ticket system. During the disastrous ten-year Cultural Revolution that began in 1966, the Down to the Countryside Movement resulted in the transfer of some 10 to 15 million privileged urban school graduates and government officials to mountain areas and farming villages, mostly in the north and west, for re-education.³

With the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and the introduction of economic (market economy) and political reforms in the 1980s and early 1990s, those who sent to rural areas during the Cultural Revolution began moving back to urban areas. It is argued that this movement "gradually expanded to include other forms of migration" (Iredale et al., 2001, p. 3) and thus sped up the process of urbanization and modernization in China.

Many factors have encouraged recent population movement in China. According to *Contemporary Minority Migration Education and Ethnicity in China* (Iredale et al., 2001, p. 5), some deserve special attention. First, a decreasing average per capita land area resulted from an increasing population forces villagers to leave their home to find non-agricultural jobs in cities. Second, a widening of income disparities and welfare systems between rural areas and cities has pressured more people to move to cities.

³ Re-education: learn from rural workers and farmers. (Iredale et al., 2001, p. 3)

Third, the state has lessened its control over the household registration system (*hukou*) and abandoned the food ration ticket system that prohibited the free movement of the people. Fourth, the transition from a state-orchestrated to a market-oriented economy has led to private ownership of land and the generation of surplus rural labour. Subsequently, the introduction of the Open-door Policy and the creation of Special Economic Zones have attracted even more rural people to coastal areas in East China. Finally, certain local governments have also planned to export migrant workers in order to fuel regional development and alleviate poverty, as evidenced by the target group studied in this paper.

In short, it was after the introduction of these policies from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, that China has been undergoing a significant transformation and experienced a boom in economic growth. These migrant workers are a mighty production force greatly contributing to the steady growth of China's recent economy. In return, the economy has also been generating increasing migrant workers, among whom there are thousands of workers from ethnic minorities. Currently, increasing numbers of rural people leave their home area and join the growing population of migrant rural workers.

In 1999, almost ten years after some of my distant relatives from Tiantang Town moved to Xinjiang, my grandfather, Sengzhang, left for Aksu City, Xinjiang - the first from his native Hawan Village seeking a better life. He worked first as a repairman at the railway station, and later bought an apple orchard. In 2011, thirty relatives and many others from the neighbor villages joined him. Some of these who moved have permanently settled in Aksu, while others have returned to their home village only during Spring Festival. Most men work in construction as heavy machinery operators or at other labour. Most women work as employees for land owners in their fields and orchards. Two families have pooled resources and bought an excavator, and currently work as independent contractors. Three other families have bought fields for cotton, walnuts, jujubes, and orchards.

This study uses my natal village, Hawan, as a case study, focusing on the reasons for the move, the new life in Xinjiang and memories of the home place to reflect on this nation-wide phenomenon of mobility.

0.5 Contemporary minority mobility in China

Although increasing rapidly in numbers in recent years, minority mobility has received relatively little attention historically in China (Gladney, 1996). According to *Contemporary Minority Migration Education and Ethnicity in China* (Iredale et al., 2001) that dealt with certain issues mentioned in the title, there are several reasons. First, minorities make up only about eight per cent of the total population in China, and account for less among the total national population of migrant workers comparing to estimates of Han Chinese migration. Data from the 1990 census show that during the latter half of the 1980s, minorities accounted for 6.5 per cent of the total number of movers (Iredale et al., 2001, p. 3). Second, there is a lack of materials, both in terms of statistics and past examples of minority migration. Third, while difficulties in conducting migration researches are widely acknowledged, language barriers in the case of certain minorities, e.g., Uyghur, make research even more challenging. Fourth, there is a high political sensitivity associated with the topic given social instability in regions like Tibet and Xinjiang and related international pressure making research especially difficult for foreign researchers.

Issues associated with minorities are, however, crucial and should receive special attention in China for several reasons. First, even though China's 55 minorities make up only about eight per cent of the total population, or less than 100 million people, this is large in terms of world population. Second, they occupy well over half of the country's land area, with Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia being some of the biggest provinces (administrative regions) in China. Furthermore, these are resource-rich areas. Excessive in-migration of other peoples and their exploitation of local resources may seriously endanger the well-being and interests of local residents, and thus result in conflict. Third, the movement of minorities will impact on their values, language, customs, and

religious beliefs. Moving to an environment, which is different from their own, often engenders loss of culture as the prevailing culture exerts great influence. Inter-marriage and interaction between these culturally different groups may encourage new cultural forms, for example, a hybrid of different cultures. Lastly, government policies in these minority regions, including Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, are crucial for overall development and directly determine the future of minority groups and their cultures. Off-positioned policies that fail to acknowledge and provide for cultural diversity in these areas may even lead to social instability.

0.6 Migration and movement

In China, migration or *yimin* 移民 suggests a change of permanent residence or place of official registration and a stay of more than twelve months (Tong, 2003). A lot of works in the case of China, however, do not attempt to make a distinction between permanent and temporary migrants as these two often overlap and have just as much impacts on the target area. These two groups might, however, enjoy different government policies as, for example, migrants from one region receiving greater preferential treatment from the government than the other. For this reason many short-term migrants avoid changing their permanent residence and officially remain “temporary migrants” even though they stay in the target area for a long time, sometimes even years. This work also focuses on movement/mobility rather than migration proper, as many temporary migrants, during their relatively stable stay (long-term residence) in the target area, have also, to some extent, affected local social development, while also being influenced by the culture and society of the target area.

0.7 Research method and sources

After determining to study Mongghul work migrants in Aksu in south Xinjiang, I conducted interviews and collected historical documents and research papers related to the movement of Mongghul to Xinjiang. During this process, I decided to focus on my own clan’s work migration to Aksu for the following reasons. I learned that, in contrast

to the studied group from Gansu, not many Mongghul people from the traditional Mongghul areas in Qinghai moved to Xinjiang. According to a Mongghul consultant from Gansu, “First, they [Mongghul people from Qinghai] might have problems with the language in Xinjiang, since Mongghul people in Qinghai only speak the strongly-accented Qinghai Chinese dialect, unlike us in Gansu who also are able to speak the Gansu Chinese dialect. Secondly, they are still very conservative. They prefer staying near their homes, rather than travelling to faraway places.” The reason that I chose Aksu as the target area is because most people from my clan moved to Aksu. In general, Aksu region receives the most in-migrants among the five regions in South Xinjiang (Li, 2010).

Whilst doing field research in Aksu, I also realized that the interaction and cultural exchange between the in-migrants and the local residents show differences whether in cities, villages, or traditional military units. In cities, the demographics and social connections are much more convoluted and multi-directional than in villages and traditional military units. One difference between normal villages and military units is that the former are inhabited by Uyghur and in-migrants, while Han Chinese are the majority in the latter (Li, 2010, p. 13). The Hawan Ha Clan migrants in Aksu are in all these areas, thus I interviewed people from all such administrative areas.

In addition to the migrant workers, I also interviewed people left behind, who are mostly elders and children. Government officials were also approached to obtain relevant statistical information.

1 Historical overview of the Mongghul Ha Clan migration⁴

1.1 The Tu and their history

The Ha Clan in Tianzhu officially belongs to a Mongolic-speaking ethnic group in West China known as Mongghul. The Mongghul are one of several groups of people who are collectively classified as the Tu nationality in China (a term which corresponds to the term Monguor used in international context), where they are one of fifty-six officially recognized ethnic groups. 'Mongghul' is a phonetic transcription of the self-appellation of certain groups of Tu living in Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Ledu County 乐都县, and Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County 大通回族土族自治县 in Qinghai Province; and in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province. Certain Mongghul elders refer to themselves as Qighaan or 'White' Mongghul while referring to the Mongols as Hara or 'Black' Mongghul. Studies on the Mongghul ethnic group reach different conclusions related to their origins. Most writings based on historical Chinese texts generally take one of two positions: (1) a connection is made with the Tuyuhun 吐谷浑 and Xianbei 鲜卑 (e.g., Lü 2002, Hu 2010), who are represented as Tu ancestors, and (2) arguments (e.g., Li 2004, Li and Li 2008) that the Tu are descended from Mongol troops who came to the current Qinghai-Gansu area during the time of the Mongol conquests, the Shatuo,⁵ and Han Chinese.

It is, however, important to note that migrations, intermingling, and identity transformation of nationalities have been so frequent in this area where the Mongghul people inhabit, the Qinghai-Gansu frontier region, that it is challenging to claim that the Tu ethnicity is unambiguously derived from a single ancestral group such as the Xianbei or Middle Mongolians.

The 'Tu ethnicity' 土族, of which the Mongghul is a branch group, are referred to as Monguor in Western literature. The official category of 'Tu' was only created after the

⁴ Information in this chapter is largely extracted from *The Ha Clan Mongghul Oral History*.

⁵ The Shatuo were a local section of the Ancient Turks (Janhun, 2006).

establishment of the People's Republic of China.⁶ Official recognition of this ethnic group seems to imply that they have a single ethno-genesis, a unified language, and culture. However, as with many other similarly established official ethnic groups in China, the situation is complex. According to Western literature, not all groups that are registered today as Tu speak a Mongolic language. Some speak Tibetan-related languages, e.g., the Tu in Shaowa, Gansu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.⁷

Disputes and the generation of academic papers in China regarding Monguor origins will likely continue, partly because of the complicated genesis of the ethnicity and the manner in which the Tu category was created in new China. The endeavour to clarify the history of the Monguor as a whole has recently made remarkable progress by studying the history of individual clans, e.g., by Li and Li (2005).

1.2 The Mongghul Ha Clan and their historical migration

In the following section I briefly summarize the results of my bachelor's thesis dealing with the origins of the Mongghul Ha clan.

Just as the seemingly enigmatic history of the Mongghul, the Mongghul Ha Clan has a poorly understood history of its own, largely due to a dearth of historical documents. Thus, in this work I prioritize the value of local oral history as told by community elders.

The Mongghul Ha Clan is not mentioned as a Mongghul clan in any written historical sources that we have identified, including *The Xining Annals*, *The Gansu Annals*, and Schram (2006 [1954-1961]). Is this due to ignorance of such historical sources, or the claim of many contemporary West Ha Clan members as not being Mongghul

⁶ The only single-ethnic Mongghul autonomous region, Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County was founded in about 1952.

⁷ See Janhunen et al., (2007) for more.

originally refers to a historical fact?⁸ To answer these questions and outline an overview of the clan's historical migration, I focused on oral history and family chronicles that survived New China's chaotic early history.

The Hawan Ha Clan chronicle consists of two parts written in Chinese. The first is the Old Chronicle composed in the seventeenth year of the Guangxu 光绪 Reign (1875-1908) of the late Qing 清 Dynasty. The New Chronicle was composed in 1992 and 1993 as a continuation of the Old Chronicle.

Originally, there was a genealogical registry of the clan's ancestors called *zongnan* in the local Chinese dialect, or *zong'an* 宗案 in Modern Standard Chinese. It was, according to clan elders, a large piece of cloth that covered nearly one wall of a room. The clan ancestors' names were written and their portraits sketched on the *zongnan*, which co-existed with family chronicles. The Ha Clan *zongnan*, the oldest known record of the clan and the only copy that existed, was destroyed in 1958 during *Pochu mixin yundong* 破除迷信运动 'Destroy Superstition Movement.'⁹

1.3 Mongghul Ha clan origin

People with the surname Ha are found among Hui,¹⁰ Mongolian, Mongghul, and Han ethnicities. The Mongghul Ha Clan *zongnan*'s destruction was a serious blow to the study of its origins; the New Chronicle that was created some thirty-five years later is largely based on elders' recollections. Regarding clan origins, the New Chronicle preface reads:

⁸ In an interview I conducted with Ha Shengcheng in 2009. He mentioned that Ha clan people were originally Chinese (Ha 2010, p.32).

⁹ Campaigns engendered by Posijiu 破四旧 'Smash the Four Olds' (old customs, culture, habits, and ideas) began in 1966 and resulted in widespread destruction of family chronicles in China.

¹⁰ Ha Baocheng 哈宝成, an independent Hui scholar living in Beijing 北京 has compiled *A Digital Version of Ha Clan History*, which he shared with Ha Mingzong. Most material from this collection is available at <http://hbcdata.home.news.cn/blog/> (accessed 17 August 2011). Ha Baocheng contends Hui surnamed Ha originated from the Muslim Khanate of Bukhara.

In terms of Ha Clan history, the clan originated from Zhuji Street 珠玑巷 in today's Nanjing 南京 City. In 1376, two brothers moved to Huangzhong 湟中 and then soon moved to Halazhigou 哈拉直沟 in Huzhu County. The elder brother settled on the west side of the river, and hence the origin of the West Ha Clan. The younger brother settled on the east side, and hence the origin of the East Ha Clan.¹¹

The accounts of Qinghai natives having originated from Nanjing are many (e.g., Schram 2006 [1954]:125, 164) among both Mongghul and Han and, perhaps, the account of Mongghul Nanjing origins was created relatively recently; such an account is absent from the surviving pages of the Old Chronicle. In any case, all Ha Clan consultants interviewed during this project stated that their ancestors originated in Nanjing.

Ha Baocheng's *Digital Version of Ha Clan History* suggests that people surnamed Ha in China descended from two brothers - Hala Buding 哈刺不丁 and Hala Buda 哈刺不达 - who were of Karluk 葛逻禄 (also Halalu 哈刺鲁) origin and were military commanders of the Oirat Esen Taishi. Their surname, Ha writes, is a phonetic transcription of the first syllable of their own non-Chinese names.

In 1452, the two brothers moved to central China - Zhongyuan 中原, and became renowned military generals of the Ming 明 (1368-1644) court. The surname Ha became first known in China during this time.

The son of the elder brother, Hala Buding, later moved from Nanjing to Hejian 河间 in today's Hebei 河北 Province and became the most prominent military general in Hejian following his father's death. The younger brother, Hala Buda, remained in Nanjing and became a prominent military officer. During this period the Ha Clan divided into two parts - one moved north and lived in Hejian and the other stayed in Nanjing. Ha

¹¹ Original text: 溯述哈氏之由来，族根系南京珠玑巷。大明洪武九年（公元 1376 年）迁徙湟中（古称西宁地区），未岁，迁居互助县哈拉直沟，哥住河西，俗称西哈家，弟住河东，俗称东哈家。

Baocheng also wrote to me in personal communication that most of those surnamed Ha in today's Qinghai and Gansu provinces migrated to these locations from Nanjing during the Ming Dynasty.

It should be mentioned that the New Chronicle states that Ha Clan ancestors moved from Nanjing to Qinghai in 1376. Ha Baocheng's research suggests the Hala brothers came first to Nanjing in 1452, which he states is the approximate time of Ha Clan origins in China. There is thus obvious discrepancy in Ha Baocheng's findings and the New Chronicle. Ha Baocheng also suggests that most Mongghul Ha Clan members in today's Qinghai and Gansu were originally Han and later were classified as Tu when the Chinese government began establishing minority autonomous regions in the 1950s and the local government in today's Huzhu needed more people in the Tu ethnic category in order to establish an autonomous county in Huzhu.

The two villages with the most Ha Clan members in Huzhu County are Xihajia 西哈家 (lit. – West Ha Clan) Village where, in 2009, there were seventy-eight families (about 380 people) of whom only two families were from another clan. The second village is Donghajia 东哈家 (lit. - East Ha Clan), where there were forty families (approximately 220 people) in 2009, of whom three families were from other clans. Xihajia Village residents surnamed Ha were all classified as Han, while Donghajia Village residents surnamed Ha were all classified as Tu. Unlike their ancestral home relatives in Xihajia Village, Ha Clan members in Hawan Village are registered as Tu.

1.4 Migration from Huzhu to Tianzhu

From the late nineteenth century, when the Gansu frontier was ruled by Ma Qi 马麒 (1869-1931) and his son, Ma Bufang 马步芳 (1903-1975), Xihajia was under the jurisdiction of the Xining Fu 西宁府, or 'Xining Administration'.

A part of the Xihajia Ha Clan moved to Hawan (some others moved to Yetu 业土 and Dakeshidan 大科什旦 villages in Tiantang Town (Township), Xidatan Township 西大滩乡; and Anyuan Town 安远镇 in Tianzhu County) in three phases from 1918 to 1942.

Digital collection of information related to these migrations based on interviews with local clan elders was a major project focus.¹² The initial migration of part of the Xihajia Village Ha Clan occurred in 1918 when Ha Nangsuo¹³ 哈囊索 moved his family to Hawan as the result of Ma Qi's efforts to increase the size of his army by forcibly drafting men into military service. According to Chen (2009, 13), salary and supplies for his army were originally provided by the Gansu government, but after Ma became increasingly autonomous, government support ended and he began collecting money and property from the citizenry. Later, when Ma Bufang (known locally as Tu Huangdi 土皇帝 "Local King") came to power, drafting men into the army intensified and taxes increased (Li and Li 2005, 302-4).

According to accounts given by elders I interviewed, Ma Bufang ordered Mongghul women to stop wearing headdresses and other traditional clothing. Those who refused were vilified and sometimes beaten. Elders said they dared not speak Mongghul within earshot of Ma soldiers, in fear of punishment. Consultants also said that Ma Bufang conscripted local carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons because of their specialized skills. For example, Ha Baode's 哈宝德 (b. 1939) father was a carpenter and, fearful of being captured by Ma's soldiers, he frequently stayed away from home and worked in such areas as the contemporary Tianzhu County, where Ma's influence was weaker. When he had accumulated enough resources to build a new house in Hawan, he moved his family there. Elders also stated boys and men aged fifteen to fifty were forced into his army; such conscriptions were implemented two or three times annually, leaving only old people, women, and children in the village. It was under such circumstances that many Hawan Ha Clan members' ancestors along with many other

¹² Some interviews are made available at: http://sms.cam.ac.uk/search;jsessionid=E7383B062ED889AEF7479AC7154BE193?qt_type=sms&qt=ha+mingzong&x=0&y=0 (last accessed on 16 June 2012)

¹³ Schram (2006 [1954-1961]:306, 307) describes *nangsuo* as an institution originally created by the Ming court in Huangzhong for local lama chiefs to carry out tasks such as "the granting of a territory, the fixing of a yearly tribute, the recognition of the chieftainship of the lama who had brought in the tribe, and of the heritability of that chieftainship."

people fled to Tianzhu and also why many Tianzhu residents speak the Qinghai Chinese dialect today.

Based on information extracted from the clan's family chronicles, oral stories, and further researches on the Ha Clan in other parts of China, a hypothetical version of the migration history of the Mongghul Ha clan ancestors proposed might be depicted as in the following map (Ha, 2010, p. 57):



Figure 1. From Kashgar “A” where Ha Clan ancestors lived moved to Nanjing “B” in Jiangsu Province, subsequently to Halazhigou “C” in Huzhu, Qinghai Province, and finally to Hawan “D” in Tianzhu, Gansu Province.

2 Labour migration of the Mongghul Ha Clan from Tianzhu

2.1 Living condition in Tianzhu and motivation for migration

Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, hereafter Tianzhu County, is situated in the northeastern part of the Tibetan Plateau, in Gansu. It borders Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County, Qinghai Province to the west, and also lies along the ancient Hexi Corridor. It has five towns and seventeen townships with a total population of about 220, 000. Tibetans are the largest non-Han ethnic group in the county. In 1953, Tianzhu became China's first minority county. The Mongghul are one of seventeen ethnicities living in Tianzhu County. According to the 2000 census, there were 12,633 Mongghul in Tianzhu (Li et al., 2003, p. 16). They are scattered in all Tianzhu's twenty-two towns and townships, however, more than half live in Zhucha Township, Tiantang Township, and Shimen Town. Many Tianzhu Mongghul belonged originally to Chieftain Lu,¹⁴ or Lu Tusi 鲁土司,¹⁵ who was based in Liancheng 连城 in today's Yongcheng County 永登县, of which Tianzhu County was a part until 1950. Many others were, however, forced into Tianzhu, especially those in Tiantang and Zhucha townships, during the war period at the end of the Qing Dynasty and during the reign of Ma Bufang, whose severe oppression of the Mongghul and conscription policies forced many to hide their ethnic identity.

The studied Ha Clan of this research resides in Hawan Village, Tiantang Township, which is known in the vicinity for its striking landscape and Tiantang Monastery 天堂寺, the biggest in the county. Even though it attracts many tourists every year, tourism seems to have benefitted only those in the township town where the monastery is located. The rest of the township population relies heavily on agriculture and other

¹⁴ Chieftain Lu, or Lu Tusi, is recorded in the *Annals of Gansu* as a descendant of the imperial Mongol family. The first Tusi of lineage Lu was named in 1370. The last Tusi, i.e., twenty-first, held the title until 1932.

¹⁵ Tusi, according to Schram, is a "hereditary local chief". During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the court granted local chiefs titles and power, with the intent to better control local people. The Tusi system was officially abolished in 1931.

sideline occupations, for example, collecting caterpillar fungus and temporary labour jobs in towns. Hawan is the only Mongghul village in Tianshu where the language and culture have been retained well. Before Tiantang was 'liberated' in 1949, land in Hawan Village belonged to Tiantang Monastery and all ten village families were tenants who worked for the monastery. According to my consultants, they had been under severe oppression and exploitation of the monastery. After the founding of the PRF, political and social tumoils such as the Cultural Revolution continued the hardship in rural China. The real rise in living standard of the villagers came only after the introduction of the household-responsibility system in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Fields were divided among all households based on the number of members. Villagers could then work for themselves and family members could eat at their own homes rather than eat communally. Villagers with some education had opportunities to work in towns. By 1998, there were twenty-three households in Hawan with a total population of ninety-seven. Villagers, eighty per cent of whom are surnamed Ha, were all Mongghul and all could speak Mongghul. Villagers annual income reached about 500-600 RMB per person. Twenty-five Hawan natives worked for the government or for factories in the county town. Forty-two people moved to the county town, among whom eleven were drivers, my grandfather being the first. He gradually taught other members from the clan, including my father, how to drive. Six of these eleven drivers owned their own trucks. In terms of the proportion of the total population, Hawan had more people move to the county town than any other village in Tiantang Township. Fourteen years later in 2012, the number of households in Hawan had not changed much, and the population was more or less stable, with an increase of just a dozen. Nevertheless, in recent years, often only old people and children remain in Hawan, except during harvest season or the Chinese Lunar New Year period (Spring Festival). Most young people move to different places as migrant workers to make money, with the most popular destination being Aksu region in Xinjiang.

Hawan Village has always been a farming place. Fields spread out on mountain slopes and are rain-fed (not irrigated). The level of mechanization was very low before

2009 when terraces were made. The only machines used were simple sowing-machines that were pulled by mules and horses, threshing machines, and tractors. Villagers cultivated wheat, beans, barley, winter wheat, and rapeseed. The yield was completely dependent on the weather and was usually just enough for the subsistence. Nowadays, since young labourers are often away, fields are increasingly not cultivated. Some villagers also experiment to grow such plants as medicinal herbs and saplings, because they bring more income than traditional crops.



Figure 2. The upper part of Hawan Village in winter 2010. Newly built terraced fields are seen on both sides of the valley. (2010, Ondřej Srba)

2.1.1 Education

Most young Hawan natives have attended at least several years of school. Many children, however, discontinued education when they finished junior middle school. Parents often assume that their children from such remote places with poor education systems cannot compete with students from cities. Even if their children enroll in an average university program, finding job after graduation is problematic, as there is a growing pressure from the employment of university graduates in China. Consequently, most parents just allow their children to stop schooling when they make such irrational

decisions as quitting school, which they often do. In 2012, there have been only three university students in Hawan I myself and my sister being two of the three. Most children join their parents and become migrant workers in their late teens.

2.1.2 Reasons for migration

As discussed above, given the living conditions in Hawan, out-migration from the village for some families seems inevitable, but why have so many members of Ha Clan left for Aksu?

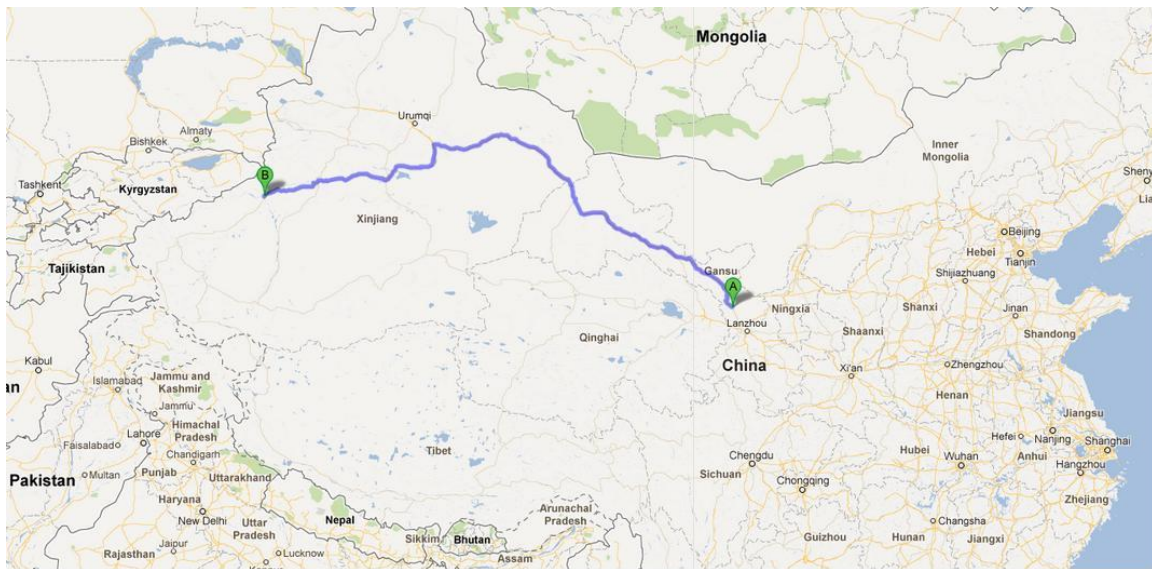


Figure 3. Ha Clan Mongghul migrant workers move from Tianzhu “A”, Gansu Province, where they have lived since the early twentieth century to Aksu “B” in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Aksu

Aksu is situated at the northern border of the Tarim Basin 塔里木盆地 and in the southern foothills of the Tianshan Mountains 天山 in Xinjiang. It is an important transport hub linking southern and northern Xinjiang. Aksu is a Uyghur word meaning *white water* or *clear water*. Aksu Region consists of eight counties and one city, with about 1,100 administrative villages. In addition, seventeen farms or regiments that belong to the First Agriculture Division of the Xinjiang Production and Construction

Corps¹⁶ are also found in Aksu Region. Until 2007, the total population of Aksu Region was 2.2 million, including about 1.7 million Uyghur (seventy-eight per cent of the total population), remaining population includes forty-seven other ethnic groups, including 455,000 Han Chinese.¹⁷



Figure 4. Aksu Prefecture, marked in red, is in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.

Historically, the number of migrants to Aksu Region has not been high. They included garrison troops, *tuntian*¹⁸ civilians, and merchants. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the most significant demographic changes in Aksu have been the increases in the

region's total population and the population of Han Chinese and other ethnic groups. From the first census in 1953 to the fifth census in 2000, the total population in the region increased from only about 780,000 to 2,141,700. The Han Chinese population increased from about 5,000 to more than 570,000 in 2000 (Li, 2010, p. 68). The main factors that resulted in such a rapid population growth have been a fast natural growth and the growth of in-migrants. According to Li (2010), 440,800 people moved into Aksu since the founding of the PRC, with Han Chinese comprising the

¹⁶ The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, known also as XPCC, is a unique economic and semi-military governmental organization in Xinjiang.

¹⁷ Statistics Bureau, 2008.

¹⁸ *Tuntian*: an old government-encouraged agriculture system in China. Often peasants without land, or refugees, or soldiers, were given plots of land and necessary tools by the government so that they grow crops. In order, the peasants had to give over half of its harvest to the government. (More see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuntian>, last accessed on May 20, 2012)

majority. Li calculates that if the ratio were considered to be 70%, he assumes that at least 300,000 Han Chinese have moved in to Aksu in the last half century.

In terms of migration into Aksu, they may be grouped into two categories, state-orchestrated and self-initiated migrations.

State-orchestrated migration. State-planned migrations occurred mostly after the founding of the PRC until the Open-door Policies in the late 1970s. The most well-known of such migrations include the permanent settlement of a division of the People's Liberation Army, which became the First Agricultural Division of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. The central government has also assigned new college graduates, and scientific and technical personnel, for example, during the Down to the Countryside Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to the region to further develop Aksu. The government has also organized young workers from eastern areas such as Jiangsu, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Henan and moved them into Aksu.

Self-initiated migrations. There were some self-initiated migrants from Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan before 1978. They lacked government support and their life was so difficult that they needed government relief food (*Li*, 2010). Most of these people returned to their native places. Major self-initiated migrations largely began only after the Open-door Policy, when increasing number of job opportunities became available. Many early migrants to Aksu were forced to leave their home places by growing hardships in life and continued farming crops after arrival in Aksu, including the first of the Ha Clan Mongghul from Tianzhu and their relatives.

2.2 Early migration of Ha Clan members and their relatives to Aksu

The earliest Ha Clan members and relatives that left for Aksu were two of my paternal grandmother's brothers and their families. They first lived in Kelakou Village near Hawan and left for Aksu on the third day of the Chinese Spring Festival in 1990. Twenty-seven families from Tianzhu County left that time, thinking they would never return. Many families even sold their houses and other property. The journey to Aksu

took about a week by slow train and it only brought them as far as Qorla, a city mid-way to their final destination. From Qorla, they were transported by bus through the chilly winter Gobi to Gongqingtuan 共青团,¹⁹ Aksu, their final destination and a totally foreign place.

The reason these 27 families left their native land for a completely unknown place was somewhat dramatic. According to interviews I conducted with my relatives, it began with a letter originally sent by a liaison person from Aksu to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu County. Consultants said that the letter was publicized by the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu and stated that everybody would have work and every family could earn at least 20,000 RMB annually in Xinjiang. This was the major motivation for moving. Other contributing factors were limited average per capita land area and few job opportunities. The informants said that they did not have enough to eat and were struggling to make their livings in Tiantang. They made the preparations and decide to set on the journey to Aksu. However, they were unaware that the local Tianzhu government had changed some details and added others in the letter from Gongqingtuan. It was only after they had arrived in Aksu that the liaison person clarified that an expected income of 20,000 RMB a year per household that high was never in the original letter, nor did the local Gongqingtuan authority expect to receive so many households in one group. They came to a place they described as, “extremely arid and waiting for them to build it up from scratch.” It turned out to be a project that continues until present.

When these twenty-seven families arrived, there was no place for them to stay and no work had been prepared for them to engage in. Many could not return home, thus the local authority in Gongqingtuan decided to distribute them into different units in the regiment first and ordered them to build shelters for themselves until they were given land to build their own houses.

¹⁹ Gongqingtuan: a regiment that belongs to the First Agricultural Division of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

My consultants said this about their living situation in the beginning:²⁰

“When we arrived, they first arranged us all to stay in the offices of the regiments. There was nothing on the floor in these rooms and we were given no beds. Our family was lucky that we had brought quilts and pillows with us when we left home. Some people had no bedding at all. Anyway, we stayed in the office for just three days and then all the families were divided and assigned to separate regiment units. We were sent to the second unit and put in a big barn, where horses were previously kept. The horse dung in the barn was about this thick.²¹ Anyway, four families stayed in the barn, one in each corner. During the month we stayed in the barn, we had to walk about two kilometers (one way) back and forth to dig underground cellars every day. They were actually ditches dug with the top covered by wood fixed across the top. The unit gave us with bricks and plastic to use inside the cellars. These underground cellars were actually our shelter for the next year and a half. By April 1 that year (1990), after we had just finished building cellars for ourselves to stay, they assigned us the real task to open up new areas for crop-planting.”

2.3 Migrants early life

The migrants upon arriving felt out of place and found it difficult to adapt to the environment, farming, and lifestyle. There were several reasons, including differences in natural environment. Sand storms, lack of rain throughout the year, and the boundless Gobi desert were beyond their imagination. In their words, *“at that time, there was nothing here...”* *“...a completely arid Gobi desert where there were no plants...”* *“When we had to open up the land for cultivation here, the ground was so hard because of its high alkaline content that even heavy machines had problems digging over the soil, and we only had hand tools.”* Consultants said that although they had every reason to return to their own home places, they could not because they had already sold everything.

²⁰ Full interview see p. 75.

²¹ The consultant showed a height of about 0.3m.

Farming methods, due to the great temperature differences in a twenty-four hour period (day and night), aridity, and the high alkaline content in the soil were completely different. The newcomers had no experiences in dealing with such agriculture, e.g., nobody knew what to do to grow crops in high alkaline soils. Moreover, when they arrived, the only land they had was the vast Gobi desert, or fields that local Uyghur had labeled as “unproductive” and did not want themselves. Finally, interaction with the local Uyghur people was difficult. Before the Mongghul people arrived, they had little knowledge of Xinjiang and the Uyghur. After their arrival to in Aksu, they suddenly found themselves as a minority and outsiders. Consultants said that they were lucky to be employed in the military transformed regiments, because at least all those who lived near them were Han Chinese, or sometimes even people originally from their home-places.



Figure 5. The original topographic features in Kekeya 柯柯牙, situated on the outskirts of Aksu City.



Figure 6. Topographic features of an area just outside Aksu City. It is believed that the original land features in Aksu were like this. This area has been targeted to be turned into a plantable and livable place in a few years. (Ha Mingzong, 2011)

Even though many families gradually returned home in the following years, those that stayed started and have lived a different life. They were forced to build houses for themselves, open up new fields, adapt to a vastly different environment and lifestyle, and had to learn new farming techniques. Together with those who had come before them, they gradually formed communities and their own culture circles. Thus, these newly formed communities and early comers both served as bases for later migrants. It was under such circumstances that my grandfather moved to Xinjiang to join his relatives in 1999, almost ten years after the first of our relatives had arrived, and migration from Hawan continued and intensified as he brought more of our relatives to Aksu.

2.4 Intensification of mobility

Movement from Tianzhu to Xinjiang gradually grew following the resettlement of the initial twenty-seven families in 1990, but it was after the year 2000 that the number of migrant workers to Xinjiang increased dramatically. According to the statistics in the

Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu, only those people that moved from Tianzhu to Xinjiang permanently, changing their permanent residence registration, accounted for 2,951; 1,796; 1,750; 1,690; 2,065; and 2072 from 2005 to 2010 respectively. Local Han Chinese have been the majority of these later migrants, but a considerable number of local Tianzhu Tibetans and Mongghul have also moved. This is nowhere more evident than in the Ha Clan of Hawan Village.

2.4.1 Sengzhang²²

Sengzhang, b. 1945, is my paternal grandfather and a native of Hawan Village. He originally worked in a local coalmine, where he served as a board member and was one of the seven most important decision makers. Having been born in a rural village and worked in a coalmine in the mountains, he always yearned to leave and live in the city. In the early 1990s, he finally managed to have himself transferred from the coalmine to a state-owned firm in the county town. He then was laid off by the company that was going bankrupt due to economic reforms and policy changes. With no possibility for him to return to the coalmine, he moved to Lhasa (Tibet) and engaged in some small-scale businesses. After more than four years in Tibet, he moved directly from Tibet to Aksu in 1999 to join his relatives²³ that had moved there in 1990, thus becoming the first Hawan native to move there.

His original work being driving trucks, bulldozers and other heavy machinery meant that he was experienced in machine repair, soon found a job and started working as a repairman at the train station in Aksu. Now in his late 50s, he moved from place to place on trains to repair heavy machines on call. In the beginning it was not too hard, but as time went by and he got older, he found it more and more difficult to travel so frequently and change the heavy spare parts from and onto machines. After four years at the train station, he bought a piece of land and began cultivating apples.

²² Entire interview see p. 89.

²³ For more information about his relatives, see interviews 1 and 2.

During the time he worked at the train station, he realized the many job opportunities in Aksu, and then encouraged young men from Hawan to move to Aksu to find better jobs, since the yields from the crops in Hawan were really low and cash income was minimal. As a result, the first ones that came had skills such as driving or working experiences outside their own village. When they reached Aksu, they found jobs immediately, for instance, an uncle who had been a driver and worked with my grandfather, decided to move to Aksu permanently and brought his family of five people to Aksu and started working in a cement factory. Initially, his wife worked for others on their farms as a laborer, but they soon bought land of their own and started cultivating apples. Their children attended a nearby Chinese school built for migrant. Today, the children do not speak Mongghul anymore and speak only Chinese.

Several other young men from Hawan Village also moved to Aksu after my grandfather negotiated job opportunities for them to load and unload trains. Most of these people lacked skills and experiences working in cities, so started at such low-level jobs. These men later related that the hardest part in moving to work in Aksu was the period when they were loading and unloading trains, because the workload was unimaginably heavy every day. They often had to unload or load a whole carriage (60 tons) per day per person and were paid very little. After slowly becoming accustomed to the life in Aksu, they sought other jobs. Some found jobs in cement or cotton factories; others learned some practical skills. Four learned how to drive trucks and (backhoe) loaders in Aksu, and by 2011, three had bought their own trucks and cars. After these men settled in Aksu, they brought the other family members to Aksu as well. Their wives often work for others on their farms and orchards, while their children attend schools built for migrant worker families. By 2012, eight families and a total thirty clan members from Hawan, including those in Aksu doing temporary jobs, had moved to in Aksu. Among these, many are my immediate relatives. My parents moved to Aksu to join my grandfather in 2008, leaving their house in Hawan unattended.

Sengzhang not only encouraged people from his own village to move to Aksu, but also people from neighboring villages, including Shangjialong, another Mongghul village in Tiantang Township. Like all the people in Hawan, the majority of villagers in Shangjialong are originally from Huzhu and moved to Tianzhu during the first half of the twentieth century for the same reasons mentioned in chapter one for Ha Clan in Hawan. However, few people in Shangjialong could speak Mongghul in 2012. The majority, especially younger people, could not even understand spoken Mongghul. But due to a similar fate and the closeness in culture, intermarriage between Shangjialong and Hawan residents was common. Consequently, when Hawan natives moved to Aksu for better work, many of their Shangjialong relatives followed.

Today, hundreds of people from Tiantang Township live in Aksu. One consultant/informant said, "When we first came here, meeting someone from our hometown was nearly impossible. If you happened to run into one, you would feel they were closer than your real relatives. But today, there are so many people from our place that in some villages, you can get around and function speaking our own dialect."²⁴ In the unit (village) where my family lives, for instance, about twenty families among about one hundred families are originally from Tiantang.

From the above information, it is clear that after the 1990 migration of the twenty-seven families, whom the government encouraged to move, all later movements were voluntary. We also see that most of these who move join family members, relatives, or friends that have already moved there and set an example of a better life. Government-encouraged migrations have become much less in recent years. There is a liaison office established by the Tianzhu government in Xinjiang that is charged with providing assistance to those who have moved from Tianzhu to Xinjiang.

²⁴ Entire interview see p. 110.

3. Migrant life in Aksu

3.1 Type of work

Work activities of Aksu migrants differ greatly, and mostly depend on how long they intend to stay and if they have moved to Aksu with all their family members. Most migrants who have moved to Aksu with all their family members and intend to stay for a long time are more likely to own some land and settle in a community. When some people intend to stay for a longer period of time, but are financially unable to purchase land, they do temporary work to save money and then buy land. Next they move the rest of their family to Xinjiang. For instance, Uncle Guo came to Aksu in 2003 as a poor young man. He worked at the train station in Aksu, loading and unloading the trains. After two years, he saved some money, but was still far from having enough to buy land. He then learned how to drive, and started working in an oil company. It was during this period that he saved enough money to buy land and build house. He soon built a house in Aksu in the village where his jujube field was. He moved his wife, mother, and two children, to Aksu in 2006. In 2011, his family bought more land for growing walnuts. Currently they have no other work than tending their fields. Their house in Tianzhu has been knocked down, but they retain the courtyard, hoping to return when they are old and can no longer work in the fields in Aksu. In 2012, except for relatives who had moved to Aksu in the early 1990s, three families (fourteen people in total) among those that moved there in the early twenty-first century following Sengzhang, have bought their own fields and settled with the intention of staying permanently. Two other families originally from Hawan could not buy land of their own and work as tenants on others' farms. They give a certain amount of their income to the owner of the land every year after harvest. Families that work on farms cultivate cotton, apples, pears, jujubes, walnuts, rape, and grapes.



Figure 7. Sengzhang, my grandfather, at work in his apple orchard. (Ha Mingzong, 2011)



Figure 8. An irrigated walnut sapling field. (Ha Mingzong, 2011)



Figure 9. A limestone excavation site. Two people from Hawan work as drivers here. (Ha Mingzong, 2011)

However, there are also transient migrant workers who take up jobs for several months in Aksu and then leave to harvest in Tianzhu. In 2012, every young man from Hawan had been to Aksu for such temporary work. Many work in cotton factories, cement factories, the train station and on farms. Many women from Hawan have also been to Aksu during the harvesting season to pick cotton and fruit. Such jobs do not last long, but there are many opportunities and most women earn more money (within one month or two at the most) than they can make the whole year in Hawan. Last year, several women from Hawan earned more than 10,000 RMB each during the harvest season in Aksu.

These migrant workers often leave their parents and children behind and focus on making money in Aksu for several months before returning home for harvest or the Chinese Spring Festival.²⁵ For example, Mr. Qi, a relative from Hawan, currently works in a cotton factory in Aksu City, while his wife works at a pig farm. Their eight year-old daughter is with her grandparents in Hawan. The couple returns only during the Chinese

²⁵ Chinese Spring Festival: Chinese New Year.

New Year. Mr. Qi's parents, who are both in their mid 60s, grow potatoes, wheat, and rapeseed in Hawan, while also looking after Mr. Qi's daughter, who now attends a local primary school. She speaks perfect Mongghul because of her grandparents, as well as Chinese, and accepts that her parents are away most of the time. When was asked if she misses her parents, she replied,

<p><i>"Maolanii bai, lii maolaji shdam uu? Ndani aaba aama nda zisi dianhua pughaji irena bai. Nda aadee aaneeni ughuoni qiangla, sainingi fu muxigina bai. Ndani aaba aama nda daxue gharighaginii kiji tigii huladi ser zenlela xiina bai. Ndani aaba aama nang xini saradini kudi iresa nda, aadee aaneedi hudu ulon sihan dangxi awuji iren."</i></p>	<p><i>"Of course I miss them, how can I not? But my father and mother often call me. They say that I should obey my grandparents, and study hard at school. My father and mother go to such a far away place to make money to support me to study at a university in the future. I am sure when they come this year for the New Year, they will bring a lot of good things for me and my grandparents."</i></p>
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When I asked her grandparents how they manage to finish all the work in the field and live up to the expectations of the girl's parent in terms of parenting their daughter, they replied,

<p><i>"Buda ghoorla do muxigu tigii ulon tarin gui. Do jiang sayou aa taraa nigiiidingi tarijii, rdeji warijingi yiigu jiu nimbaa. Ndasgini dirii tarijin nerasa serngi zenla</i></p>	<p><i>"We don't grow as many crops as we did before, but to keep ourselves from being bored we still grow a few mu²⁶ of</i></p>
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²⁶

Mu: a Chinese unit of land area. 1 *mu* equals to 0.1647 acres.

shidam uu, nimbaa sa? Do maolasa ne potatoes and wheat, so we don't
 nigiidini taraani aa kudigu lesгани darang have to buy food. How much can
 shdagu tigiingaji da, buda ghoorlani do you make from the things we
 hudu tolghuai yiidighajin jiu ne xjunni grow here nowadays, right? We
 jiaoyu wa ya. Buda ghoorla pujigngi yii feel like we can still finish work
 tenina maa, xjunni pujig dira nigidi da both in the fields and at the
 bangmangla adaguna maa. Qi gandi rdeji, house. The only thing that
 xuetangdija kurguigu zailaguungi hao moor worries us most is the girl's
 nigidi pudiraajin pujiisa adaguni gua maa, education. You know, we are
 do jiu sainidija nige surghuaghaya kisa dii both illiterate and can be of no
 buda ghoorla adaguna ya. Xiandini ne help with her school work. It is
 xjunni ujesa darang zhong lia, ban diranaa easy to feed her on time and
 zisi yi ai mingngi zhanki shdanaji da, do drop her off or pick up from
 huino amatigiingi chengla xiin hao dii school on time, but her education
 kanda kileji iregha adaguna bai. Zhongdian is a big responsibility. She is
 zhongxuengi kaola adasa dii buraaja ya. doing well at this stage in school.
 Yang aaba aamanaa tigiingi dagonglagu She often ranks number one in
 xja maa. Ai, do jiu ne shge fudannga ya. Qi her class, but it is still too early to
 aaba aamaniini gong yang bii pughala tell if she will be able to get into
 xiigha adaguna, xjun huino kurisa ser one of the top middle schools in
 hgiliaguna, dii kudida nera teradi ser the county town. You know, if she
 hgiliaguna maa." is not successful in this first step,

it will be all over for her. She will
 have to live a life just like that of
 her parents. So, this is a big
 challenge for us and worries us
 the most. But still, you can't tell
 the girl's parent not to go,
 because she needs major support

and we also need some extra money for different things at home.”

Two brothers, Baosan and Zhongsan, face a similar situation. They both moved to Aksu in the early twenty-first century with their wives and seldom return home to visit their parents and children.

Prior to Baosan’s move to Aksu, he followed Sengzhang to Tibet for a few years. Even though he was not very successful in Lhasa and did not save much money, living in Tibet provided much experience and helped him mentally prepare for later trips. He moved to Aksu in 2004, and before he learned to drive and managed to buy a backhoe loader with his brother in 2010, he had worked in the train station, a fodder factory, a timber factory, and several other places. His younger brother, Zhongsan, had worked as a security guard in Beijing for several years before moving to Aksu to join his brother. Their wives left their children seven to eight months after giving birth to join their husbands in various income generating activities. In 2012, their children are 7 and 8 years old respectively and they continue to live with their grandparents in Hawan.²⁷

In conclusion, type of employment for those who moved from Hawan to Aksu differs based on how the family’s plan for their future. Those that intend to stay in Aksu for a long time move all their close family members and try to settle in Aksu. They often own some land and work primarily in their fields cultivating cotton, vegetables, and fruits. Itinerant workers leave their parents and children in their home village and find temporary jobs in factories or work as short-term labourers on other people’s farms. Their jobs are not stable and often change. Currently, eleven people from Hawan work on temporary terms in Aksu. A few of these intend to stay permanently in the future.

²⁷ For more, see interview on p. 99.

Many women from Hawan go to southern Xinjiang to pick cotton and apples during the harvest seasons.

3.2 Material/Income conditions after migration

Low income was the most common reason given for moving to Aksu by migrants. Questions concerning the level of family income before migration indicated many migrants had low income, often ranging from about 2,000 RMB to 4,000 RMB annually per family. Sources of income were from selling rapeseed, potatoes, and beans. Some families also had modest income from construction work near the village and such sideline activities as collecting medicinal herbs, e.g., caterpillar fungus,²⁸ and coal mining.

After migration, low levels of education prevent migrants from obtaining government and other office-based positions. As a result, the livelihoods of the migrants rely on such non- or low-literacy dependent employment as agricultural, factory labourers, and drivers. Two young female migrants from Hawan stood out from the afore-mentioned spectrum of job opportunities. One was a kindergarten teacher and the other worked in sales at a real estate agency.

Post-migration income has generally improved. Families that own fields or orchards have a stable income. The level of incomes depends on the annual yields from their crops and fruits, which depend on the size of their fields, types of crop or fruit they cultivate, and in the case of fruit, the size and age of the trees. One of my aunts has an eight-*mu* jujube field. Last year, her family earned more than 100,000 RMB after selling about four tons of jujubes. Another relative has an eighteen-*mu* apple orchard, and earned 180,000 RMB in 2011. In addition, since the price of land/field increases every year, the value of their property increases yearly as well.

²⁸ Caterpillar fungus: *yartsa gunbu* in Tibetan, or *dongchong xiaocao* 冬虫夏草 - literally 'summer grass winter worm' in Chinese, is an herb found on the Tibetan Plateau. It brings a high market price, which has resulted in extensive grassland disturbance and collection on the Plateau.

The income of migrants engaged in activities, for instance, factory and construction work in Aksu City, has also increased considerably compared to their income in Hawan. An uncle received about 1,000 RMB per month when he first came to Aksu in 2005 and started work in a fodder factory. Today, he is still in the same factory, and receives more than 4,000 RMB per month. However, he must buy food for himself, unlike those who have their own fields and can grow most of their own food, he spends a significant amount of money on food and daily expenses. The income earned by three drivers who work in a construction company fluctuates between 4,000 to 7,000 RMB monthly.

Female migrants from Hawan working in the city earn much less than their husbands. Fewer work opportunities are available for them. Most female often change job activities and relatively have more free time. As a consequence, they often even manage to return home to look after their children and parents in Hawan. Even so, they can earn much more than is possible in Hawan. The workload of these female migrants increases sharply during harvest times in Xinjiang. During this period, they move from place to place mostly in southern Xinjiang picking cotton and harvesting fruits. The income from such activities is considerable and in some cases, may be 20,000 to 30,000 RMB per person in a two-month period.

It is important to note that the average workload in Xinjiang is much higher than in Hawan. As mentioned, farming in Hawan depends on the weather. Once crops are sown after plowing, not much work is necessary to tend the crops until harvest, which lasts for about a month. On the contrary, farming in Aksu involves irrigation, fertilization, pollination, and application of pesticides. The procedure is much more complex in Aksu due to weather, soil, and other environmental factors. Some migrants noticeably lose weight after migration.

4. Culture change

Observation of various cases of migration in China shows various types of interaction between the post-migration communities and the new environment. In most cases movement of an ethnic group from a region where identity is closely related to values, language, customs and religious beliefs to a region where the socio-cultural environment is different results in changes of the migrants' culture and ethnic identity.

Aksu is a region with a majority of Uyghur population, and the traditional Uyghur culture is the forming factor of the cultural environment of the whole area. Besides Uyghurs, many Han Chinese live in the area, imposing Chinese culture in some parts.

In this situation the cultural traditions and ethnic identity of the Mongghul migrants face two different cultural environments, of which, the Uyghur culture is the more different from their own than the Chinese culture. Their exposure to Uyghur and Han Chinese cultures lead to culture change, and it is most evident in farming style, language, customs, and housing.

4.1 Farming

Irrigation. All Hawan fields are unirrigated and yields thus heavily depend on the weather. According to the villagers, it is "... based on pure luck. Sometimes the crops could be damaged all of the sudden by a flood, and some other times, a drought could severely harm the harvest." After moving to Aksu, the natural environment has changed dramatically. The annual precipitation in southern Xinjiang is really low and irrigation is thus inevitable and is based on the numerous streams originating in the snow-capped Tianshan Mountains to the north. Moreover, the land in Aksu has a high alkaline content and irrigation is thus necessary to wash it down to the deep ground. Therefore, good yields in Aksu mainly depend on whether the fields are irrigated in time and adequately. When a family wants to purchase fields, the primary concern is if irrigation system is ensured.

Farming schedule/system. Due to the differences mentioned above, migrants cannot farm according to the schedule and the techniques used in Hawan. In the case of winter wheat in Aksu, seeds are sown in the winter, and when it grows to several centimeters high, it freezes, but during spring, it re-germinates and is harvested in June. Other crops are immediately sown for another harvest before winter. In Hawan, all fields are planted only once a year.

Tending mode. Limited per capita land area in Hawan demands great care in land utilization, whereas in Aksu farm labor is not as meticulous due to a limited work force and a relatively larger amount of land. For example, in Hawan, people try to remove every single weed from their fields. This is impossible in Aksu as they get less help from neighbours and must deal with more land on their own.

Farming tools. Farming tools used in Aksu are dramatically different from those used in Hawan. Hawan fields are on slopes and thus it is nearly impossible to use machines in fields. Fields in Aksu are flat and farming is much more mechanized. Friends and relatives tend to buy different tools and machines, thus they borrow from each other to reduce the cost of purchasing tools. For example, an uncle has a tractor specially designed for spraying pesticides, and another uncle has a plowing machine. They borrow each other's machines and use them in turn.

4.2 Language

In human cultural exchange and interaction, language change is frequent and easily observable. Language, as a carrier of culture, effectively connects people of an earlier generation with those of a later generation by transmitting the ideology and culture of our ancestors. Language is also a vehicle for history, and may show interaction and exchange between various groups of people. As for the migrants from Hawan to Aksu, the handing down of Mongghul language from an older generation to a younger one is an important continuity of Mongghul culture. Similarly, acquiring knowledge of Chinese language (dialect), in a few cases Uyghur, are important indicators of cultural change. In the case of migrants from Hawan to Aksu, Mongghul

language transmission between generations seems to be at an end. Interaction with non-Mongghul speaking groups results in a deteriorating competency in Mongghul and monolingualism in Chinese.

4.2.1 Mongghul

In terms of the transmission of Mongghul language from older to younger generations, interviews show that Mongghul is no longer the common language of the migrant families at their homes. When I interviewed my grandaunt, Ha Sengxiu, and asked her to speak Mongghul, she nervously tried to persuade me to interview her in Chinese. When I insisted and we started speaking Mongghul, my uncle and other relatives present smiled from time to time upon hearing Mongghul. Only during the interview, did I learn that Ha Sengxiu, originally a Hawan native, could speak Mongghul fluently. When I asked if other members of her family could also speak Mongghul, she said:²⁹

“(My son) doesn’t speak Mongghul. He doesn’t even understand Mongghul anymore. When he was back home, he spoke to us in Mongghul and could speak Mongghul well. Actually he was always talking to his grandmother in Mongghul, but since we moved here, he didn’t have anyone to talk to in Mongghul, so he has forgotten it all and now doesn’t even understand a thing. He was only five when we moved here. This year he is actually twenty-seven years old. So, it’s been twenty-two years since we moved to this place...” “These girls (her granddaughters) don’t even stand a chance (to be able to speak Mongghul). We don’t teach them anymore. Who would teach them? It is only me in this home who still speaks Mongghul now. Nobody else can speak it, nor does your uncle. Though he understands it still.”

“Nowadays, children go to school and they all start speaking Chinese. Actually it would be good if we don’t forget these things...”

²⁹

Entire interview see p. 82.

“There are no people with whom I can speak Mongghul anymore. At that time, when the granny from Dazongtaighar was still around, we would talk to each other in Mongghul when she visited me here, but after she passed away, there are no more people who can speak Mongghul in this place. Then, when I go to visit either your grandfather or Aunt Xiulan, I talk to them in Mongghul, but other than that, there are really no people I can speak Mongghul to.” “When your granduncles from Huazangsi call me on the phone and talk to me in Mongghul, I often stammer and become very nervous. From time to time I switch to Chinese as well, hehe...”

My uncle said, *“When I was back home, I used to speak Mongghul sometimes, but since we moved here, I can’t speak Mongghul anymore.”*

The same situation prevails for other migrant families. Many don’t see apparent benefit of speaking Mongghul, and thus don’t bother to teach or learn it. Among those who moved to Aksu from Hawan or neighbouring villages, not a single person from the second generation spoke Mongghul in 2012. Most did not even understand Mongghul. Moreover, due to these people being scattered across the region of Aksu and seldom meeting, even those from the first generation that still speak Mongghul no longer actively use Mongghul.

When elders were interviewed and asked what they thought of the language situation, most expressed sorrow and regret over losing their native language so quickly. Most young people, however, remained indifferent to the deteriorating situation with the language. For example, an uncle asked me questions and stated:

“Why do you think we should learn or know Mongghul nowadays? The fact that the language is dying is because nobody speaks it here. Actually the number of speakers in our home place is also quickly shrinking. This is a result of modernization and development. There is no way we can stop it. Yes, if our parents hadn’t moved here, we would probably still speak Mongghul, but it was impossible for them to stay home just for the sake of language and culture. But

again, even if we all could still speak Mongghul, so what? It doesn't have much practical use. Why would parents insist their children learn Mongghul and why would any child today bother to learn if it doesn't bring practical benefits? The fact that those children in Hawan and Huzhu still speak Mongghul is, I think, purely because they are still surrounded by people speaking it. So, you see, this is nobody's fault. We can't blame our parents for not teaching us the language."³⁰

Since, in general, the Mongghul cultural identity is rather unconscious among most Mongghul people from younger and middle generations, I interviewed Dr. Li, a fervent Mongghul cultural activist and preservationist from Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County, about his opinion on the ongoing loss of Mongghul culture which accompanies the migration. He opposes the idea that Mongghul from his place are also moving to places like Xinjiang.

<p><i>"Ne kidi fansa do budasgini tiriisa (Wuzen, or Huzhu) da Xinjiangja liao Xizangja bankiji yiu jin hudu ulonna. Do kilesa budasgini dirii kun ulondaji xijja, ghajar yiixi ulon gua. Fuye gaokiji ghajar da gua. Ser nigiiidi zenla adagu, dii yiila huladija pudiraana ya. Ghari xiisan ne nige bang kun dii dirii kidi tirii kidi Qidar kun liao dii lunaqibazao kunsgela sosan xjuanra njeenaani ughuanaa liao lisi wenhuasginaa tashdadiina dii. Neni do bu maolasa nigiiidida saini gua. Bu neni dii yigiiidi da yii duraalana."</i></p>	<p>"In recent years, many people even from our place (Wuzen, or Huzhu) move to places like Xinjiang and Xizang (Tibet). The reason is that there are too many people here and too little land available for them. They also don't have any sideline jobs. Not being able to earn money around here, they just start moving to places far away. Since these people that have moved away stay with Chinese and other peoples, several here and several</p>
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³⁰ The interview was in Chinese and is not transcribed.

there, they soon stop speaking their language and abandon their own culture. Personally, I really don't think this is good. I really hate to see this happening these days."

4.2.2 Chinese Dialect

All the migrants from Hawan can speak their local Chinese dialect, which is locally known as the Qinghai-Chinese dialect, which is the primary language used by in-migrants in Aksu and is thus preserved quite well because of the relatively large number of speakers of this dialect in Aksu. Yang Decang said, *"When we first came here in the 1990s, it was nearly impossible to meet anybody from our home place. But if we were lucky and ran into one, there was so much joy. Today you can meet so many people from our place. We normally speak Qinghai dialect here in the villages. You can get around without problems."* Second, people with the same origin tend to stay in same communities, which enables them to use their native dialect on a daily basis. For example, my family stays in Team Three, Shuiguanzhan, Aksu Region. More than twenty of some one-hundred households are originally from Tiantang Township. They help each other farm when necessary and remain in closer contact than with the families from other areas.

Predictably, in Aksu City, people tend to use Standard Chinese, especially in schools, government offices and other public spaces. Many people also use the local Chinese dialect in Xinjiang known as the *"baihua 白话"*³¹ or *"Lao Xinjiang Hua 老新疆话"*.³² According to Dong (2002), Chinese dialects in Xinjiang have developed based on

³¹ Xinjiang Baihua: the Xinjiang Chinese dialect, a mixture of various Chinese dialects, mainly Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces, spoken by migrants.

³² Lao Xinjiang Hua, or Old Xinjiang Dialect, is the Xinjiang Chinese Dialect.

the Chinese dialects spoken in China's northwestern provinces. The dialect spoken in southern Xinjiang has been formed and based on the language spoken by the Hui people who escaped from Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces to southern Xinjiang after being defeated by the Qing General, Zuo Zongtang, during the Hui Insurrection, also known as the Dungan Revolt, between the 1870s and the 1890s. It is also for this reason that people from Tianzhu have few, if any, problems understanding the Chinese dialect spoken in Aksu. My father had been to many areas of Gansu Province prior to his moving to Aksu, and thus can even speak the Chinese dialect in Aksu. When he was asked how he learned to speak it with people at work in Aksu, he replied,

*“Xinjiangni ughua ndasgidi kileji ‘Xinjiang dialect is not
booji iresa yiixi fuzangi gua. Ndasgini difficult for us. People from our
tiriigu kunsgi diriigu ughuoni sainingi place can understand it without
yanglana dii. Do amakiji kileguna sa? Do any problems. How should I
kilesa diriigu ne ughua ndasgini tiriigu explain this? It is more or less
Huihuisgi ghulijainla sarlaji irena. Ne similar to the Chinese dialect
ndasgini Lanzhou tiriidang kilejin ughua, spoken by the Hui people in our
Qinghaini Qidar ughua, Putonghua, ai hai place. It is actually a sort of mix of
ne diriigu Weichu ughuasgi yigua niilayaan Lanzhou Chinese dialect, Qinghai
kiliana. Bu muxihang tirge pudiraa dirii tirii Chinese dialect, Standard Chinese
yangji aanjigu ughuanida nigidi and Uyghur. For example, they
sunnishdaji kileji iregha shdana hao, use a lot of words like ‘mada’
Xinjiang Baihuani kilesa yiixi chijin gua ya. (trouble/troublesome) and
Donaa bu shangbanlena xiisa, dii zixi ‘aiganzi’ (bonehead) from our
diriigu Xinjiang Baihuala yii ghuliasa jiu Qinghai Chinese dialect. You
ndasgini Lanzhou ughuala ghulianii dii. know, since I have been to
Lanzhou ughua Qinghai ughua tigii different places as a driver, I have
fuzange puxja Putonghuala sarlaji irenii heard all these dialects, so it
hao, gan aanjisa iresani kunda yanglana wasn’t really hard for me to speak
the dialect here. When I am at the*

bai.”

workplace, I speak either Lanzhou Dialect or Xinjiang Dialect. Actually, unlike Qinghai Dialect, which is very different and difficult for non-native speakers, Lanzhou Dialect is closer to Standard Chinese, so if you communicate with people from different places in Lanzhou Dialect, they understand it without much problem.”

4.2.3 Uyghur

Since moving into Aksu, migrants have been in close contact with Uyghur and their language in everyday life. As a result of this long-term interaction and exposure to each other, some in-migrants have gradually obtained competency in Uyghur language to various degrees.

According to Li (2010), when migrants first moved to Aksu during 1950s and 1970s, there were few Han Chinese people and interaction with local Uyghur was extremely frequent and necessary. They worked and lived with the Uyghur in communes, and gradually many in-migrants learned Uyghur in order to better communicate with local people. Based on his fieldwork, he claims that many people that moved in during this period have learned Uyghur to some extent. They are now the eldest generation in Chinese communities in Aksu and usually have no problem communicating with the Uyghur on everyday life topics related to agriculture and business. However, those that moved to Aksu after the 1990s cannot speak Uyghur because Chinese-culture based small communities/enclaves already existed. When the migrants moved to Aksu from that period on, they preferred to directly move into

Chinese communities, where they did not have problems communicating with people and felt culturally closer with the Chinese than the Uyghurs, thus, only a few learned Uyghur.

Another factor that caused differences in using Uyghur among the in-migrants is their communities, since in some units/villages, the majority is Uyghur, whereas in others, the majority is Han Chinese. Most migrants originally from Hawan live either in Aksu City or Chinese based communities on the outskirts. The Chinese-language based enclaves and rare interaction with Uyghur result in none of the migrants from Hawan having a command of Uyghur language.

Lastly, a better competency in Uyghur is also seen among the in-migrants' young children who have grown up in units and villages where they had Uyghur friends. For example, an uncle's friend lives in a village on the outskirts of Aksu where there are many Uyghur. His six-year-old son speaks fluent Uyghur, since he spends much time with Uyghur neighbour children. Moreover, the government has recently issued a policy known as the "bilingual education". Even though this is largely focused on Uyghur learning Chinese, the children of migrants are also taught Uyghur language in primary school.

In conclusion, the language used among migrants is mainly their native Chinese dialect in individual communities. In the case of Mongghul people from Hawan, they speak either Qinghai Chinese or Lanzhou Chinese dialects based on individual cases, since most are competent in both. They do not speak Mongghul anymore because of a limited number of speakers and the attitude that there is no value in preserving Mongghul mother-tongue. In terms of usage of Uyghur language among migrants, competency varies due to factors such as when they moved to Aksu, what kind of community they live in and with whom they interact. My interviews and fieldwork suggest that none of the migrants from Hawan speak or understand Uyghur because they directly moved into Chinese-language based units and villages and have little contact with Uyghur people.

4.3 Customs

People who move to a new environment which is different from their traditional environment may lose aspects of their culture, adopting the dominant culture of the new environment, through gradual acculturation. Hawan Mongghul people, in comparison to the main body of Mongghul population in Huzhu, are already influenced by local Chinese culture in Tiantang, and moving to Aksu involves further acculturation. Unlike their fellow ethnics in Huzhu, where most Mongghul people speak their language and still carry out traditional practices, people in Hawan have been assimilated to such an extent that often they are unable to distinguish even their practices and norms from those of neighbouring ethnicities, except in the case of language and certain wedding rituals. Cultural transformation of the Hawan Mongghul after migration from Huzhu has been introduced elsewhere (Ha and Stuart 2006, 2008; Ha 2007, 2010).

After moving to Aksu, the Mongghul people have been exposed to local Uyghur and Han Chinese from such provinces as Sichuan 四川, Henan 河南, Jiangsu 江苏 in their units/villages as well as Chinese enclaves that have sprung up on the outskirts of Aksu City. As a result, Hawan Mongghuls, who are often dispersed among the Han in Aksu, strive to emphasize their identity as people from Tianzhu, to establish a connection with others of Tianzhu origin, as opposed to revealing and stressing their ethnicity as Mongghul, who are few in number. This second degree of acculturation of the Hawan Mongghul in Aksu is evident in food/clothing, wedding and funeral rituals, and festivals.

4.3.1 Food and clothing

Having come from Tiantang Township in Tianzhu that has relatively low temperatures and a climate suitable for growing fewer vegetables such as green onions, cabbage, cauliflower, zucchini/courgette, and leeks, Hawan migrants in Aksu now grow many more kinds of vegetables. As my mother said, *“Because of the weather and irrigation here in Aksu, it is possible to grow many kinds of vegetables. In Hawan, you*

don't even have chili pepper and tomatoes, and the only time that you have a taste of these vegetables is when you go to the township town and buy them. Comparing to what we eat in Hawan throughout the year, this place is much better off." In terms of meat, migrants from Hawan also have more choices. In Hawan the most common meat is pork, which is still not guaranteed for the whole year, since most families kill only one pig just before the Chinese New Year and smoke or salt the meat for the rest of the year. Chickens are usually prepared for guests, while fish, mutton, and beef are available generally only during the Chinese New Year. In Aksu, on the other hand, migrants not only have different kinds of meat, including pork, which has been available since Han migrants arrived and started pig farms, but also eat out from time to time, owing to better economic conditions and the convenience of living near or in the city. In addition, local Uyghur cuisine is also seen among the in-migrants as they often have *nan*³³, *pilaf*³⁴, and barbeque (*kebabs*) at home.

In terms of migrants' clothing, the everyday clothing basically it has not changed. However, as long as traditional Mongghul clothing is concerned, it has completely disappeared in Aksu. People in Hawan, especially women, still wear traditional clothes sometimes when they go to the township town, or when there are festivals, but in Aksu, this is never seen.

³³ *Nan*: a kind of Uyghur bread.

³⁴ *Pilaf*, or *plov*, in Chi. *zhuafan*, refers to rice cooked with vegetables and meat.



Figure 10. The house of a relative in Gongqingtuan Farm. The rooms on the right were built in 2002, and the rooms on the left are so-called earthquake-proof buildings, which were built in 2010 when the local government promised to provide financial support. (Ha Mingzong, 2011)

4.3.2 Weddings

After migration of Ha Clan members from Huzhu to Hawan, most first generation males married women from Huzhu, as they were closely related culturally and linguistically. The second generation, however, also married women from nearby villages. A number of Han Chinese females moved in and acquired various levels of local Mongghul language. For example, my mother, originally a native of a neighbouring Han village, learned Mongghul when she moved into my father's home in Hawan. It is only recently that people from Hawan moved to different places to work and married women far away from Hawan. These include temporary migrants working in Aksu.

Based on field research, it is possible to say that there are basically four spouse selection processes among migrants in Aksu. First, many have been introduced to spouses from home place by their family and friends. Some marry before they bring their wives to Xinjiang, while others take their wives to Xinjiang and then marry. The

later is less common. Second, migrants of the same origin marry. The couple is often introduced to each other by a common friend of the two from their home place. Third, many also marry people they meet on their own, for example, from work. Fourth, a few marry local Uyghur.

The traditional Mongghul culture wedding process is complex from initial stages such as “*tiqin*”,³⁵ or proposing/ “*opening the bottle*” as known among local Chinese, “*dingqin*”,³⁶ “*jiangli*”,³⁷ “*songcaili*”,³⁸ “*qingqi*”,³⁹ till the wedding rituals themselves, and *renmen*⁴⁰ after the wedding. It is impossible to carry out a traditional marriage without the support of neighbours, relatives, and other important figures such as a *warwa*, or a matchmaker and two *nashijin*,⁴¹ who know the wedding procedures and the required songs and orations. However, after moving to Aksu, there are few relatives and friends

³⁵ *Tiqin* 提亲, or proposing, the man’s family asks a *wariwa*, or matchmaker, to go to the woman’s home to propose. The *warina* often brings two bottles of liquor and some other gifts such as brick tea, a *khatag* (white scarf), and bread. If the woman’s family agrees and accepts, they open the liquor bottles and replace the liquor with wheat grain (or drink the liquor in some cases if a member from the man’s family is present) and ask the *warwa* to take it to the man’s home. This is also known as “opening bottle” among locals. If the woman’s family does not agree, they return the liquor bottles unopened to the man’s family.

³⁶ *Dingqin* 定亲, or engagement. The man’s family identifies an auspicious day and visits to the woman’s family to formally have the engagement ritual. The man’s family brings gifts for the woman. Such gifts include (silk) cloth, clothing, and liquor.

³⁷ *Jiangji* 讲礼, a ritual during which the man’s family goes to the woman’s home to decide the amount of pride-price and other gifts they should prepare for the woman’s family. On this occasion, important members of both sides are present, e.g., parents, elder siblings, maternal uncles, *warwa* (the matchmaker), and respected neighbours. This process is critical, and it may last for a long time as the man’s family argues for a lesser bride-price while the woman’s family asks for more.

³⁸ *Songcaili* 送彩礼, a ritual during which the man’s family fulfills their promise by taking gifts and money to the woman and her parents. The man’s family fulfills this process through several visits, each time bringing part of the promised gifts and money and asking the woman’s family to reduce their demand, which the woman’s family often does as a courtesy.

³⁹ *Qingqi* 请期, or ‘finding the right day’, for this ritual includes important figures from both the man’s and woman’s sides to gather and choose a wedding day. A *feng-shui* master, lama, or spirit medium might be consulted to make the choice.

⁴⁰ *Renmen* 认门, or *renqin* 认亲, is a process during which the newlyweds visit each other’s relatives to become better acquainted.

⁴¹ *Nashijin* are those responsible for escorting the bride to the groom’s home. *Nashijin* should be good at singing, dancing and giving speeches, know all the rituals and be able to deal with unexpected circumstances.

available. Furthermore, most migrants are young people who are not familiar with the sophisticated traditional wedding procedures. As a result, the whole wedding is simplified with the abovementioned stages combined into just a few. The most important wedding ceremony is also simplified as, in most cases, the couple's families invite all their relatives and friends to a restaurant in the city for a banquet to end it all. This is an imitation of modern wedding ceremonies of Han Chinese people. Traditional Mongghul songs and rituals are not performed at all.

In the case that the couple wants to have a traditional wedding, they return to their home place and marry in the presence of their families and friends in the traditional way. This is most common among the temporary/itinerant migrants because their family members are in their natal villages. Zhongsan, for instance, met her wife in Aksu, and when they decided to get married, they briefly returned home and had a wedding ceremony in Hawan. But, because his wife is a Han Chinese, it was not a traditional Mongghul wedding.

It is now also common among migrants that couples meet each other through work and decide to live together even without their parents' consent. Several Hawan Mongghul simply brought wives home from distant places when they returned. In most such cases, the woman's family opposes the marriage, but can do nothing to prevent their daughter from eloping. It often takes a long time for the couple to finally come to terms with the wife's family.

My consultants also said that few males from Tiantang married local Uyghur. I later learned that actually one of my fellow clansmen from a neighbouring village married a Uyghur several years ago and took his Uyghur wife to Tiantang. Cultural and environmental differences were such that they eventually divorced and the woman returned to Aksu.

4.3.3 Funerals

Like the Chinese, Mongghul people attach much importance to funerals believing that funerals are a way of showing their last respect to the deceased as well as indicate the deceased's legacy. According to Li (2010), funerals among Han Chinese migrants in Aksu are simplified, because few relatives and friends are present. Based on individual family preference and the deceased person's requests, some cremate, while some others choose burial. Among Ha Clan Mongghul, most deceased are buried, although in the case of a young death, cremation may be chosen. Two years ago, when my aunt's mother-in-law became sick, she was taken to Tiantang at her request. She died later in her home village. My aunt and uncle were unable to see her before her death. Her funeral was carried out based on local practice. Trumpeters were invited to honour the dead, and the corpse was displayed for five days for their relatives and neighbours to pay final respect.

4.3.4 Festivals

Hawan Mongghul celebrate numerous festivals including local festivals and some traditional Mongghul festivals. Among the most important are, for instance, Spring Festival (the Chinese New Year), *Aiyue'ai*,⁴² Tomb Sweeping Day,⁴³ Fifth of the Fifth Lunar Month⁴⁴, Sixth of the Sixth Lunar Month⁴⁵, and the Moon Festival. Traditional Mongghul festivals are not organized in Hawan due to its small Mongghul population,

⁴² *Aiyueai*, or the second day of the second lunar month, is a traditional Chinese festival during which local peasants pay respect to the dragon deity in charge of rain in the hope of having good harvests in the coming year. In Tiantang, people cook beans during the festival.

⁴³ Tomb Sweeping Day, or Qingming Jie, is a traditional Chinese festival in the beginning of the fourth lunar month dedicated to remembering and honouring ancestors and their graves.

⁴⁴ Fifth of the Fifth Lunar Month, or the Duanwu Festival, is a traditional Chinese. In Tiantang, people put tree branches with green leaves under their house eaves, and prepared *liangmian*, or cold noodles, and *liangfen*, which is a cold Chinese dish made from potato starch powder.

⁴⁵ Sixth of the Sixth Lunar Month: a traditional festival in China that is celebrated among many ethnic peoples. On this day, residents in rural places gather on the highest mountain-top in their villages and offer sacrifices to local deities. Lamas from the township town monastery may be invited to chant scriptures in the hope of a good weather for the growing crops. Offerings such as meat, liquor, fruit, bread, and candies are either consumed or divided among the villagers at the end of the gathering day.

many Hawan Mongghul travel to Huzhu to celebrate festivals such as Dige Bo, or the Egg Festival,⁴⁶ and Darmaaxii.⁴⁷

After migration to Aksu and integration with people from other areas, small scale local festivals like the Second of the Second Lunar Month, Sixth of the Sixth Lunar Month and traditional Mongghul festivals are no longer practiced and observed. These festivals are closely related to local traditions and pertain to shrine culture and venerating local deities. It is not uncommon to hear migrants say “*People from our home-place have too many rituals and rules.*” Nation-wide festivals such the Spring Festival, the Moon Festival, and, in cases where graveyards are nearby, Tomb Sweeping Day are still practiced. However, according to some migrants, even these nation-wide festivals are no longer as intense and enjoyable as they once were.

Take the Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival, for instance, many say it has become much simpler and more casual. My mother had this to say in regard to the Spring Festival:

“Back home, it takes so long to get ready for the New Year. You have to spend several days to bake *kunkuzi shdima*.⁴⁸ And you must also prepare various kinds of fried bread, so, when you offer it to the guests, it doesn’t look so boring.

⁴⁶ *Dige Bo*, or the Egg Festival, is a performance held in Mongghul areas in Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County during which spirit mediums perform. This traditional Mongghul festival is called ‘Dige Bo’, or the Egg Festival, because people who participate in the event bring boiled eggs and knock their eggs against other people’s eggs. The cracked egg belongs to the person whose egg did not crack. Sacrifices of various kinds are also made to the village deities. This event is held especially to please the deity. Local spirit mediums sing and dance during the ritual. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9afvaVcy5Y> (last accessed, June 4, 2012).

⁴⁷ *Darmaaxii*: a traditional Mongghul festival held in Danma in Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County, Qinghai from the eleventh to fifteenth days of the sixth lunar month. Mongghul people from all across Mongghul areas, including Hawan, come wearing colourful traditional clothing. Various performances include *hua’er singing*. Groups of people sit together and sing *hui’ai*, or ‘love songs’, that otherwise cannot be sung in public places. Darmaaxii is the most popular festival among the Mongghul people.

⁴⁸ *Kunkuzi shdima*: local bread baked in a sealed iron pot buried inside burned mixture of smoldering grain husks and animal dung. When Mongghul people visit relatives and friends, especially during the Chinese New Year, they bring two pieces of this bread and a piece of brick tea.

You remember, we used to have big wooden boxes full of such bread during the New Year. I just want to laugh to even think about that today. You also must butcher pigs and chickens you have been feeding the whole year for meat, and you have to ask people to help you with all this. To think back that is really a lot of preparation. You know, people here just buy everything. Today we don't even have to make our own bread; you can buy everything we had back home and more. When we visit relatives following the first day of the year, we don't take *kunkuzi shdima* any more, instead we bring things like fruit, milk, and so on. In fact, we don't even visit all the relatives one by one as we did back home. Today we just gather in a restaurant and finish everything in a 'group greeting'.⁴⁹ It is so much simpler and easier not to go to many places to send New Year's greetings and wishes to every relative. But it is also because of this that, you don't feel like it is as intense and festive as before. The way we celebrated at home sounds complicated, but for us that is what a real New Year celebration is all about. Frankly speaking, I didn't feel anything special about the last several New Year celebrations. Firstly, you and your sister haven't been there with us⁵⁰, and secondly, they have been so easy and simple that before you can feel anything, they are over and you have to start working again. Yeah, anyway, for some reason, something about the New Year is missing."

4.3.5 Religious beliefs

The local Yellow-sect (Gelug) Buddhist monastery known as the Tiantang Monastery (Tib. mchod rten thang bkra shis dar rgyas gling) and an ancestral Niangniang belief have been the most important aspects of the Mongghul Ha Clan religious lives engaging in a traditional way of life by farming that is almost entirely dependent on the

⁴⁹ Group greeting: a recent Chinese term for local people. Traditionally, during the Chinese New Year, relatives visit each other's homes extending their New Year's greetings and wishes. In recent years, however, this practice has been slowly replaced by a 'group greeting', which is a gathering of relatives and friends, who extend mutual greetings.

⁵⁰ Both I and my sister were studying abroad and were unable to return home for the annual New Year festivities.

weather, Hawan Mongghul developed beliefs in local mountain deities as their protectors against such natural disasters as floods, hailstorms, and drought. Mongghul Ha Clan also always seek assistance from their primordial ancestor and family goddess, Ha Clan Niangniang, for it is believed that she has great influence on rain, certain illnesses, and protection when people leave for far away.

After people moving far away for paid employment, for example, Ha Clan Mongghul in Aksu, shrines and monasteries are absent in their lives, so these local practices stop. In some extreme cases where they believe that only their own family goddess or ancestors can help, they return home to visit the Niangniang shrine or the clan graveyard. Many people, however, also call their relatives and neighbours in Hawan and ask them to visit the shrine, graveyard, or the family/clan chronicle/genealogy on their behalf.

5 Migrant impact on local Uyghur

Mongghul migrants from Tianzhu to Xinjiang are relatively limited in number. Their impact on local inhabitants has not been to a noticeable degree. However, the question of how general migrations of both Han Chinese and minorities affects local Uyghur is discussed.

The movement of migrant workers from their original places to new destinations, particularly, in the case of a mobility trend from rural areas to urban areas, has ensured migrants greater economic benefits, better education, better social welfare, better medical care, and a more modern life style. However, it has also taken its toll on the movers by endangering their traditional values, language, customs, beliefs, and community relationship and solidarity. Similarly, the influx of tens of thousands of migrant workers from all over China to Xinjiang has brought about positive as well as negative changes and impacts on the indigenous population of the destination area. Predictably, publications treating this issue in China have mainly focused on the positive aspects, while studies and researches conducted by Westerners had paid more attention to negative outcomes. This present paper strives to bring both sides of the discussed issue.

Migration has not only expedited the economic development and modernization process of the destination areas, but also improved locals' education, and social care facilities. According to consultants, before migrant workers moved to southern Xinjiang, the local Uyghur population mostly grew grain crops such as corn, wheat, rice, and other triticeae crops⁵¹ for their own daily consumption, and in addition, had such cash crops as cotton, beets, and such oil-bearing crops as hemp and sunflowers. The arrival of migrants introduced methods of vegetable cultivation and brought technology, including mechanical tools, and improved the yields of their traditional crops as well as the cultivation of fruits like apples, pears, jujubes, and walnuts, which have generated unprecedented income for locals and enabled them to have a much more modern way

⁵¹ Triticeae crops include wheat, barley, and rye.

of life. Secondly, the arrival of migrants has helped locals turn what used to be arid, and barren desert into oases one after another, such as Aksu. It seems that everyone in Aksu takes pride in that they have been a part of this endeavor and miracle-like mission. Cities and towns that have sprung up in these oases have provided infrastructure for the locals and better education, social and medical care, and living standard. Thirdly, migrants have also to a great extent helped the locals build a bridge between their traditional cut-off home-region with the rest of the world. The advent of information technology and transportation has opened up a much bigger world for the Uyghur to realize their own dreams.

On the other hand, such improvements and benefits that are achieved and made available for the Uyghur have almost entirely been at the cost of even more severe degrees of damage to their traditions, values, rights, and resources. Such damages are irreparable and inflamed a series of social problems and social instability in the region. The Chinese government, as a result, has been severely criticized and condemned by the international community for its public policies and development plans implemented in the region.

Xinjiang is known for being rich in its vast mineral and oil deposits. In fact, a huge part of the gas and oil is used in developed areas in eastern China. This has greatly boosted the economic zones in eastern China and ensured the people of the regions a comfortable living. In order to better utilize the natural resources in this region and spur the country's growth, the government decided to invest in the region's infrastructure, building massive projects like the Tarim Desert Highway and a railway to western Xinjiang. This policy accelerated migrant inflow into the region. However, this has not helped the people that historically lived atop these natural resources as much. Migrants pouring into the region have taken up most government, administrative, and managerial job positions available, as the Uyghur often fall short on education and social network. While migrants tend to be wealthier, the Uyghur tend to have low income jobs. Such

economic disparity and social inequality have fanned ethnic tensions between the migrants and locals.

As more and more migrant workers move into Xinjiang, many Uyghur have come to resent the strain they have placed on limited land and water resources. After all, the most important for most Uyghur people is agriculture. Sufficient land area and water for irrigation remain of the utmost significant assets Uyghur have, given the fact that few job opportunities exist in official work units. Most Uyghur are not well educated in Chinese, which is necessary in civil job posts. Rich migrants who move into Xinjiang not only buy local fields, but also open up new areas for cultivation, and turn them into family farms and business. Relatively financially worse off, Uyghur cannot compete against them. Limited water resources in the region pose greater challenges for the poor when it comes to irrigating farmland in time. Many Uyghur complain that they have become servants on their own land, and the situation leads to growing tensions and problems between migrants and the local residents.

These deteriorating issues force many Uyghur to gradually abandon a traditional lifestyle that they have been used to and actively become involved in acquiring competency in the Chinese language and knowledge of Chinese culture. This is nowhere more evident than in the numerous schools that have been newly built to provide Uyghur so-called bilingual education in both Chinese and Uyghur. Even though this policy applies also to migrants, interviews show that the focus is more on a Chinese education for Uyghur than an education for the children of migrants in Uyghur. Moreover, as culturally independent and isolated as the Uyghur are, in recent years, many Uyghur have also been forced to seek other job opportunities in industrially more developed regions in China. For example, the violent July 2009 Urumqi Riots that resulted in the death of hundreds of people and thousands of injured, were reportedly ignited when a violent incident broke out between some Han and Uyghur migrant

workers in Guangdong,⁵² during which two Uyghur co-workers were killed. Reports say that about 200,000 young Uyghur have migrated to and worked in Guangdong Province since early 2008.

Already in the 1990s, when the movement of migration into Xinjiang intensified, movements seeking independence and equality among Uyghur have never stopped from occurring. In recent years, there have even been quite a few violent outbreaks that have resulted in the arrest or killing of many people, including migrants and the local Uyghur. Xinjiang, therefore, remains socially as one of China's most unstable regions.

⁵² Guangdong 广东: a southern province in China, is a major attraction for thousands of migrant workers from around China.

Following its socialist market economy system policy in the 1980s and the 1990s that loosened controls on movement, and encouraged rural to urban transformation, China has been experiencing booming growth in economy. One of the most notable work forces that the boom has produced and at the same time made China's steady growth in economy possible is the huge number of migrant workers. Even today, increasing numbers of rural residents leave their home areas and join the fast growing population of migrant rural workers. The exact numbers of migrant workers in China are actually impossible to count, because of the huge number of migrants known as China's 'floating population' who do not change their official residence registration. This makes it difficult for the government to learn the exact figures. These *non-hukou* migrants are operating more freely and are subject to less administrative and economic constraints than migrants who change their *hukou*, or their residence registration.

This migration fever in present China has recently also reached some of China's most far-flung and impoverished areas, including vast territories inhabited by minorities, including the Mongghul people. This unprecedented mass movement of migrant workers seeking better paid job opportunities has lifted millions of people in China out of poverty. Interviews and field research show that in all flows of the minority movements, kinship ties, identity, ethnic, and native-place and shared-home-place networks are vitally important. They appear to be more important for minority migrants than for Han migrants.

Interviews and research also show that it is more likely for the more acculturated minority groups to move to a different region than the less acculturated, since the latter are less able to adapt to and accepting a new environment and culture. The Ha Clan Mongghul from Hawan serves as an example. Before moving to Aksu in Xinjiang, they had already been in intense cross-cultural interactions with Chinese people from Qinghai, Gansu, and other places and were culturally much more influenced by the Han

Chinese than Mongghul in Huzhu, Qinghai. Tibetans and Mongghul in Qinghai, in contrast, are more likely to migrate within their own regions, i.e., the Tibetan Plateau.

While state-orchestrated migrations are still seen, the government's role in dictating and preventing migration has greatly decreased over the years. Self-initiated migration makes up the majority of population movement in contemporary China. On the whole, it is safe to say that most self-initiated migration is for economic gain, although social, educational, and environmental factors do play important roles in contemporary movements.

Migration enhances the level of intergroup communication and mixing. The outcome of this sped-up process is not only social development, but also irreversible cultural loss for minorities. This is most evident among the minorities, as they suffer cultural loss and identity change through gradual acculturation and integration. Many have even been completely assimilated.

Xinjiang is of great significance and merits special attention in terms of migration. The single most significant demographic change in Xinjiang since 1949 has been the increase of migrants including Han Chinese and other ethnic groups. The migrant population proportion has risen dramatically from 6.7 per cent in 1949 (220,000) to about forty per cent in 2008 (Howell and Fan, 2011). In terms of total mobility, Xinjiang is a minor player numerically in China compared to regions like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, and such eastern areas. In terms of the type and explanations for migration, however, Xinjiang is of unique significance.

The explanation lies partly in the history of migration to Xinjiang since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. In the early 1950s, detailed plans were made by the state to relocate a large number of people to Xinjiang. The first were soldiers, who eventually moved their families there. Then in the 1960s, farmers and labourers were encouraged to move from Jiangsu, Hebei, Hunan, and Anhui (Iredale et al., 2001). Even though return migrations followed when these people found living conditions difficult, it was quickly controlled by the state. Spontaneous in-migration to

Xinjiang expanded in the 1980s, and rose even sharply in the 1990s from 345,365 in 1990 to one million in 1995 (Ren and Yuan 1999). This number has since been growing as more and more people are attracted to the area, including places like Korla, Aksu, and Kashi. As predicted, most migrants are Han Chinese from source provinces like Sichuan, Henan, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Gansu. Recent official data and research, however, suggest that minority migrants have also increased considerably in Xinjiang. This can be seen in the region's ethnic diversity with forty-eight of China's fifty-five recognized minority populations present.

Another factor that makes Xinjiang as a significant migration destination in China includes facts that make Xinjiang one of China's most unstable regions. Xinjiang is China's largest administrative region (province), and one of China's most restive regions. The proportion of the Han Chinese in Xinjiang is less than the local minorities, predominantly the Uyghur. The fact that it borders several other Central Asian Muslim states worries the Chinese government, which suspects that certain Uyghur groups are in direct contact with Muslim extremists and terrorists. Actions have been taken to prevent internal instability by the government. Migration is one such action with the intention to build mutual understanding. However, the recent sharp growth in the number of migrants into the region and exploitation of local resources has caused serious tensions between the locals and migrants.

The labour migration into Xinjiang also directs attention to the impact on the way how the migration affects local traditions of the Uyghur people, as migrants gradually spread mainstream culture present in China into the region and the various forms of technologies that have been introduced to the local inhabitants. While many of these impacts may be positive, many question the potential damage that may result.

In short, Xinjiang is just one of many such provinces and regions with a dominant local and ethnic culture in China that are directly influenced by migration. While it is understood that social transformation and modernization process are inevitable as globalization becomes more and more of a reality, it is also important for people and

government to take well-reasoned actions to ensure a smooth transition. Economic development and materialistic means in life are without doubt important, but from a different point of view continuing traditions and cultures is even more important for the future of any country.

7 Conclusion

The importance of recording certain elements of a society at a moment in time is a shared value among many academic disciplines. The moment this work has tried to capture lies in changes experienced by a minority clan in western China, specifically the Mongghul Ha Clan in Hawan, Tiantang, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province. Changes involve a geographical change as the clan experiences labour migration, namely, a relocation process, and the culture changes that ensue.

After eighty years of living in Hawan, the Ha Clan Mongghul have started to migrate once again, this time to Aksu, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region searching for economic and social improvement. This work not only records the reasons and process of this on-going migration, but also is a continuation of my bachelor's thesis that dealt with Mongghul Ha Clan migration history. This study also reflects modern movement of the rural minorities in rural Gansu and Qinghai as a whole. By focusing on and capturing this geographical change of a specific minority clan, this work contributes without doubt also to the study on minority migration in western China.

Positive impacts migration has made on the Ha Clan Mongghul are detailed, particularly in terms of their material conditions and social well-being. However, the benefits they have come to enjoy were achieved through a loss to their culture and identity nearly as seen in changes to lifestyle, language, and customs. They once made a living based on farming that was completely dependent on the weather. After migration, they work in factories as labourers in cities or work on farmlands on the city's outskirts that are very mechanized. They once spoke Mongghul, but now they have no one to speak to in their native language, due to the small number of Mongghul in Aksu, Xinjiang and that fact that they are scattered in different places. Already in the second generation, almost none can speak Mongghul. Their ethnic identity has been watered down and what is written on their ID card is nothing more than just a formality and an advantage they take to benefit from special minority policies. Customs, such as

traditional weddings and festivals, are extremely simplified as such activities often require a large number of people of the same ethnicity.

The considerable impacts on Uyghur people in the destination area by such migrations are also described, such as economic development and modernization, as well as the regions exploitation of natural resources and gradually acculturation.

In concluding the work, special attention should also be paid to the labour migration of the studied clan to southern Xinjiang in the context of its migration history. If the hypothesis drawn in my bachelor's thesis that the ancestors of the Mongghul Ha Clan may have possibly originated in southern Xinjiang refers to a fact, the ongoing migration of clan members could be seen as a return to their original homeland, and their gradual change in identity suggests a repetition for this has already happened several times in the clan's history - from being Karluks to becoming sinicized in Nanjing and then incorporated into the Mongghul population upon arriving in Huzhu in Qinghai, and finally sinicized again. Despite the fact that the people discussed in this work are not totally aware of their possible origin from southern Xinjiang and the current migration could be an accidental return, it is, however, not entirely impossible and unrealistic as such models of historical migrations and ethno-linguistic changes are actually quite frequent in Central Asia.

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9. Appendix

9.1 Interviews

1. Interview with two granduncles⁵³

Location: Third Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm, Wenxu County, Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region⁵⁴

Date: 25 July, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Fourth Granduncle – Hu Zhanming, b. 1955

Speaker C: Fifth Granduncle – Hu Zhanquan, b. 1958

Speaker D: my grandfather – Ha Sengzhang, b. 1945

Speaker E: Fourth Grandaunt – Ha Sengxiu, b. 1955

Speaker F: Fifth Grandaunt – Ye Sengmei, b. 1960

Introduction and summary of the interview:

The interviewees, Hu Zhanming and Huzhanquan, left their native village of Kelakou, Tiantang Town, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province in 1990 to the Second Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm,⁵⁵ Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. They decided to leave their home-village and move to a totally unfamiliar land after learning the possible job opportunities and annual income expectations in Aksu publicized in an official letter originally sent by the then liaison person between Aksu and Tianzhu County to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu. It was only after they arrived in Aksu that they found out the liaison person hadn't promised anything in the letter and only mentioned if Tianzhu County could export some migrant workers since there was a shortage of labour in Aksu. The Bureau of Civil affairs then embellished the letter and added that there were plenty of job opportunities and the expected

⁵³ The brothers of my paternal grandmother.

⁵⁴ In Chinese: 新疆维吾尔自治区阿克苏地区温宿县共青团农场三队.

⁵⁵ Gongqingtuan Farm: the Communist Youth League Farm.

annual income per capita would be about twenty thousand RMB. The incentive of the local Tianzhu government was probably to fuel development and alleviate poverty by export migrant workers as a means of earning income. However, ill fate beset those 27 families, including many local Mongghul and Chinese, that abandoned their homes and moved to Aksu from the beginning. They arrived in Aksu only to find out that they were not expecting so many families all in one group, so they had to take shelters in horse stables and underground cellars for well over a year and half, until they made sun-dried bricks themselves and built simple abodes for themselves. The early years were an ordeal of a series of difficulties, which included starvation, opening up new areas for planting, building drinking water and irrigation/drainage systems, getting used to the new modes of farming and tools, and also the weather. Many families that moved to Xinjiang with them in 1990 returned to Tianzhu and those that stayed, including the interviewees' families, are leading a quite comfortable life finally after 22 years of hard work. The interviewees' families each has about 20 *mu* of land today and are growing walnuts and cotton that bring in forty to fifty thousand RMB annually. Their regrets over the years are that they couldn't send their children to better schools and have them educated well due to limitations on the support from them. At present, one of the interviewees' son still belongs to the population of migrant workers and moves from place to place for better job opportunities, while the other's son works in the local unit administration. He Zhanquan also said that his daughter-in-law has eloped with someone else leaving her own daughter behind.

The interviewees are the first of the author's relatives that left their native land and migrated to Aksu. They were joined after almost ten years by the author's grandfather before more followed in the first decade of the 21st century.

A:	Granduncles and Grandaunts, could you please talk a little about when you moved here and how you led your lives here first?
B:	We left our home village in January 1990, just on the third day of the Chinese Spring Festival. At that time, there was no railway to Aksu, so we first took a train from home to Daheyan in Tulufan. That took us two days and a night. From Tulufan, we went by bus all the way here to Gongqingtuan. The whole trip lasted six days. When we arrived, local people first arranged for us all to stay in the local regiment's office. In the room, there was nothing on the floor and we were given no beds whatsoever. We were lucky that we brought quilts and pillows with us when we left home. Some people had no bedding at all.

	<p>Anyway, we stayed in the office for just three days and then all of the newly arrived people were divided and arranged into separate units in the regiment. We were sent to the second unit and arranged in a big barn, where they used to keep their horses. At that time, the horse dung in the barn was about this thick. Anyway, four families had to stay in the barn, one in each corner. During that month we stayed in the barn, we had to walk to a place about two kilometers (one way) back and forth to dig cellars every day. They were actually ditches dug in the ground with the top covered by wood fixed from one edge of the ditch to the other. They provided some bricks and plastic to use inside the cellars. These underground cellars actually served as our shelter for the year and half to come. By April first that year, after we had just finished building cellars, they gave us the real task to open up new farming areas. First we had to build irrigation canals. Male employees had to finish eight meters in length per day and females had to finish six meters. The channels were 2.5 meters in width and 1.5 meters deep. In a month, we could earn only about a hundred RMB. Even though a bag of flour cost only twenty RMB and cooking oil cost two RMB per kilogram, that wage was really too little. During festivals and other celebrations, older employees, or those people who had arrived earlier, were given some gifts such as rice and oil, but as newcomers, we didn't get anything.</p>
A:	<p>What encouraged you to move to this place in the first place? Was it that the government supported you or was it your own decision to come to a place previously unknown to you?</p>
B:	<p>The reason was that at that time our home township received a letter sent by the local government from here in Aksu that said they were recruiting laborers and promised that the laborers would earn at least 20,000 RMB a year. According to the person, a Tianzhu native who moved to Aksu one year before us that acted as the liaison between Aksu and Tianzhu County, he wrote a letter to the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Tianzhu County, but didn't promise that the laborers' annual income would be that much. The fact was that the bureau in Tianzhu embellished the letter a bit and that attracted our attention.</p>
A:	<p>How many people came here with you that time?</p>
B:	<p>In total twenty-seven families came that time from villages like Dakeshidan, Xiaokeshidan, Kela, Yetu, Kelakou, and Dazongtai. Only after we arrived here did we find out that they were not expecting so many people and that there was miscommunication between the two regional administrations. That was the reason we didn't have places to stay and had to dig underground cellars for ourselves. Most people that came at that time gradually</p>

	returned home.
A:	Were there people in this village before you arrived?
B:	<p>There were people from other places, like Wuwei, but from our county there were only two or three families. All these people officially migrated here with monthly wages. When we came, there were only about 200 <i>mu</i> of plantable fields in this village and there were only around eight laborers. Today, we have more than 5,000 <i>mu</i> in this village and the whole <i>nongchang</i> (farm) has more than 20,000 <i>mu</i>.</p> <p>At that time, life was hard, really hard... We didn't have enough to eat. We had problems with the local Uyghur people. When we were in the underground cellars, at night, you heard rats and lizards running around the cellar, oh, that was scary. We didn't have light, nothing...</p>
A:	What about children's education? Was there a school here?
B:	There was a school, but it was so far away and there was no road to the school, so kids didn't go to school much at that time.
A:	When you came here, there are only few people in this area, right?
B:	Oh, yeah, yeah, very few, only some local Uyghur. Now in this particular unit, there are around eighty households. Most are from Tianzhu and came later towards the end of the 90s. At that time, we had already finished plowing new farmlands.
A:	Granduncles, you are all actually Mongghul, right?
B:	We are all Mongghul.
A:	Are there any people from Qinghai around here?
B:	In the second unit, there are a lot of people from Ledu County and Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County, but I guess most are Chinese. In our unit, there are only three families from Qinghai - two from Ledu and one from Huzhu.
A:	Right, so most of these people came on their own, right?
C:	Yeah, actually all came voluntarily, including us. It is just that we believed in some lies and hoped for dreams when we left. But when we first arrived, well, this place was... well, nothing much to say really, simply just a vast gobi desert. Nowadays, there are more and more people moving into this place after we have turned it into plantable fields and prepared everything for them.
E:	We have done all the hard work. To think back, I can't believe now what we had to do and

	all the things that we had to go through; that when we were trying to open up new areas into cultivation it caused us so much pain. It was hard... Look at the people today, we now have all the resources ready finally, and they come pouring in from all over the country and are benefitting more from our work. That year in 1990, most people moved here in three groups. We were the first group and all these three groups did all the hard work for the people who came later. Before us, only one group of people moved here from our place, and that was between 1988 and 1989. Those people were officially migrated, together with their <i>hukou</i> , ⁵⁶ and enjoyed more governmental support than us.
A:	How long did you all work on opening up new areas?
B:	We started on April 1, 1990 and finished for the first year in August that year. We were then told to build our own houses. We all then started making sun-dried bricks and those families that had enough labour built their own simple abodes with two or three rooms by the end of the year, but most people stayed in the cellars through the winter and we had our sun-dried brick abode one and half years after our arrival. The first year we reclaimed some new land for planting, but when we planted the next year, the alkaline content in the fields were so high that there was basically no yield at the end of the year at all. We spent much of the second year doing various temporary jobs to make ends meet. If you made about seven or eight RMB a day, you would be so happy.
A:	Granduncle, this house is actually the second house you have built over the years for yourself, right?
B:	Yeah, let me see, this is the second house. I ⁵⁷ built the first one in another unit here, a bit north of here. I actually didn't live in the first house at all and sold it to some other people and moved to the second unit, where it became really hard and I actually decided to go back home to Tianzhu. But neighbors and relatives persuaded me to stay and then I moved to the fourth unit here and started working in a beer factory. This was in the fourth year. I made a little money, around 2,000 RMB, from there and moved finally back to the third unit here. I was allotted a small abode and it was in this house that I lived the eight following years. I built this house with savings accumulated over those eight years, and we have been

⁵⁶ *Hukou*: place of official registration.

⁵⁷ Instead of saying 'we' or 'my family', he said 'I', which is common in rural China because the man in the family, as its head, represents the whole family, and thus 'I' means 'he and his family'.

	living in this house for nine years now.
A:	I see that you are building some new rooms and it seems that the style is the same in all the families around here. Does the local government support you or do you intend to build these rooms at your own expenses?
B:	These are the so-called earthquake-proof buildings. All these should have already been built last year. When the first leader of this county came and indicated we should build these rooms, he promised that the government would provide us with cement, bricks and some subsidy and that we should start building as soon as possible. It's been a year and we have almost finished building the rooms at our own expenses, but we haven't received anything from the government yet. We don't know when we will receive the subsidy, if at all. We have spent more than 43,000 RMB on this.
A:	What is the situation like currently in your family?
B:	Now it is much much better. We have about 19.6 <i>mu</i> of fields. We grow walnuts, cotton, and some apples.
A:	Are these fields now yours?
C:	No, actually all these fields belong to the government. We are just contractors. We have to pay various taxes and what we have left at the end of the year is really just a small amount. Since last year, the situation has become even more complicated when a firm came and bought all the fields that are in Gongqingtuan. We are actually really just like sub-contractors, or the employees of the firm in other words.
B:	Actually the person who got the bid was the ex-secretary of Gongqingtuan, somehow through some so-called reforms, he bought these fields for 30 years, so we are just his hired laborers. Basically, if you pay the taxes and rent on time and want to stay here, you can, but if you don't obey his rules and pay the taxes and rent on time, he can fire us at any time. He has actually made this clear on several occasions and said that he could always find people to replace us.
A:	What are the tax and rent like?
B:	For an A-level field, we have to give him 55 kg of cotton per <i>mu</i> of field. The price of the cotton differs from year to year. Take last year, for instance, it was 5 RMB, so we had to give him about 275 RMB per <i>mu</i> . It is just the rent for the field. Now if you add all other additional fees and rents, we pay more than 500 RMB per <i>mu</i> of field.

D:	This is the case with cotton fields. But with apple orchards, it is a bit different. When the trees are still small, you have to sign a contract that from a certain year you will start paying certain amount of rent and that increased every year as the trees grow bigger. But there is also an agreement that places a limit or a cap on the amount of rent fee. In our case, the cap is in the 15 th year, and the top amount of rent fee they can ask from you is 600 kg of apples per <i>mu</i> . Last year, 1 kg of apple was 1,3 RMB, so you pay about 900 RMB for one <i>mu</i> of apple field to your boss. I don't know what it is like with your walnut fields.
B:	For walnut fields, we start paying rent fee from the seventh year. The first year we pay about 20 kg of walnut per <i>mu</i> and 28 kg the next year, so it increases like this annually for seven years until it reaches the cap. Imagine 1 kg of walnut is worth 35 RMB, so for the first year you have to pay about 700 RMB per <i>mu</i> of walnut field. I think in our place, the cap is about 75 kg per <i>mu</i> .
A:	Granduncle, what crops do you grow here and what is the income like per year?
B:	We mainly grow walnuts. The income differs from unit to unit. In our unit, the income is relatively a bit lower, because there is a high alkaline content in the soil and the yield is not as good. From our own fields, we had about 700 kg of green walnuts, and it was the sixth year. This year I think we will have about three tons, from 19,6 <i>mu</i> of fields. If you sell them after drying, the income will be about 20,000 RMB, I think.
A:	So the main source of income for you is these walnut trees, right?
B:	Yeah, and we also plant cotton in between those trees.
C:	Actually the main source of income is not the walnut trees currently, because they are still small and the yield is quite poor. The main source of income is the cotton we plant in between those trees. That is actually what helps us make ends meet.
A:	Fifth Granduncle, what crops do you have, also trees?
C:	Yeah, we also have walnut trees, now in their fourth year, so not much income from them still. In between the trees, we also plant cotton. We harvest about 200 kg of cotton each year. Last year the price was about 12 per kg.
A:	Fifth Granduncle, what about labourers that work in your fields? How many are there in your family?

C:	It is just the two of us. ⁵⁸ Your uncle goes to different places for temporary jobs. He used to have a motorcycle repairing shop, but now he works in a cotton factory in Ku'aile.
A:	What about the girl's mother? ⁵⁹
C:	She has left us... eloped with someone else...
A:	Fourth Granduncle, in your family, I see that grandaunt is having problems with her leg, so it is only you who is working in the fields?
B:	Yeah, mostly it is just me. Your uncle is working in the unit office. He's been there for four years now and his wife is at home and takes care of the children mostly.
A:	I see. I would say that is all for now.

2. Interview with my grandaunt

Location: Third Unit, Gongqingtuan Farm, Wenxu County, Aksu Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Date: 25 July, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Sengxiu, b. 1955

Commentary:

When the author asked the interviewee to speak Mongghul, she was quite nervous in the beginning and try to persuade me into speaking Chinese with her instead. The author's granduncles sitting beside her were smiling from time to time when they heard her speaking Mongghul.

Ha Shengxiu was born in Hawan and married the author's paternal grandmother's brother. After she and her husband left their home village in 1990 with 26 other families for Aksu, she has only gone back three times until 2012. The first time she went back was the third year after their moving to Xinjiang and the last time was when she went to see her brother for the last time

⁵⁸ He and his wife.

⁵⁹ My aunt.

before he died in 2009. She said to visit her home place again in the future will be very difficult, because her legs are not well to move around any more.

Ha Shengxiu said there were few Mongghul people that she knew around her village, so she spoke Chinese most of the time. Even in their family, nobody speaks Mongghul any more. Her husband understands, but rarely speaks a word in Mongghul. Her son used to speak Mongghul with his parents and grandparents all the time when he was small, but since their move to Xinjiang and his studying at schools, he gradually stopped speaking and today he doesn't even understand. Ha Shengxiu said the only occasions that she would speak Mongghul today in Aksu were when she met with people from Hawan, for example, the author's grandfather and aunt. But such chances were really rare, since they all lived in different places and were engaged in different things. The interviewee's grandchildren grow up speaking only Chinese and it is very possible that they don't even know what the word "Mongghul" means.

Ha Shengxiu also regrets that her children and grandchildren do not speak Mongghul any more and that probably the only thing that keeps them different from others has to stop during her children's generation.

A:	Aagunainai, naadii qi do dirii ghariji ireyaange do dura kudi dii booji xinnuu gui?	Grandaunt, then do you still go back to our home-place often?
B:	Xinnii.	Yeah, I do.
A:	Naa qi muxi nige hui kijii xiiwa, dura?	Then when was the last time you went home?
B:	Ghariji iraa sanniani nige hui xiiwa bai. Dii huino dii kijii xijasa, buda ghoorla nige hui xijja bai. Do kilesa ghoor hui xijja.	After moving here, I went back home once in the third year. Then later I forgot which year that was that I went. We went together once, so that makes two times in total.
A:	Qi 90 niansa gharji ireyaange kidi hui xiiwa?	How many times have you visited your home-place since you moved here in 1990?
B:	San hui xijja. Shdinang aadee narladiiyaange bu xijasa, tensa muxi dii jang ghoor hui xiiwa.	In total three times. Actually last year, when your granduncle (her older brother)

		got sick, I went once, and before that, I went there only twice.
A:	Do dirii qi nenkiji ireyaange do qimula Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua ba?	Since you moved here, are there people from our place who talk to you in Mongghul here now?
B:	Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua. Te sihoudi Dazongtaigharigu aanee yiigu sihoudini gan muni dirii iresa buga ghoorla zisi Mongghulla ghulianii, aanee guila diiya dii ndala Mongghulla ghuliajin kun do gua zhao. Dii teni aadee liao Xiula aagusgini tirii xiisa Mongghulla nige yii kilesa, dii xuankijin kun gua bai.	There are no people with whom I can speak Mongghul anymore. At that time, when the granny from Dazongtaighar was still around, we would talk to each other in Mongghul when she visited me here, but after she passed away, there are no more people who can speak Mongghul in this place. Then, when I go to visit either your grandfather or aunt Xiulan, I talk to them in Mongghul, but other than that, there are really no people I can speak Mongghul to.
A:	Dii dirii gharji ireyaange dii yizhi qidarlawo bai ao?	Then since you came here, you have been speaking mainly in Chinese, right?
B:	Yizhi qidarlawo bai. Durogu kunsge ghariji iresa dii darong Mongghulla xuankiji iregha shidana.	Yeah, have been speaking Chinese all the time. Sometimes when people from our home-place come visit us here, we can speak some Mongghul though.
A:	Naa, Aagunainai, qi Mongghulla han tigii saininge iregha shdanna, bu dii Mongghulla do saininge adana dii.	Then, Granduncle, you still speak Mongghul so nice. For example, I can't speak Mongghul that well any more.
B:	Dii buda jiu teni Huazangsini aadeesge dianhuamangi iresa dii ghulian ghuliandi jiu jijibaba jiu tigiinga ya, aminkisa qidarla da ghuliadiina, hehe...	Actually even I am also like that. For example, when your granduncles from Huazangsi call me on the phone, I often stammer and become very nervous. From time to time I switch to Chinese as well,

		hehe...
A:	Ao, tenkisa qi Huazangsi liao tirihang dianhua zisi pughana bai?	Right, in that case, you still call your relatives in Huazangsi and so on often, right?
B:	Dianhua ziji pughanii.	Yeah, I do call them often.
A:	Dii shdinang rjiang Huazangsini aadeesgida gharji ireji ujela irejasa?	Last year or the year before that, granduncles from Huazangsi came visit you also, right?
B:	En, ireja. Dii nang naa Baosanni aabani gharji ireyaan, bu darong dirii iremuu kiji, teni aadee ghoorla, dii huino hao gan boo xiijagina bai, kusa. Dii bu sgajida gui dii.	Yes, they came. Actually this year when Baosan's father came here, I thought he was going to visit me as well, with your grandfather, but later I got the news that he had already returned home. I didn't even get to meet him.
A:	En, dii ulon so shdaji guijinna ba dii.	Right, probably he couldn't stay any longer, I guess.
B:	Dii amaguwa hao, kiduudur sowa hao. Gan zhuyao defang langlela ireja bai.	Then I didn't know what happened. I didn't know how long he stayed. He came to just see the place, I guess.
A:	Do dura langlela booji xiiginiuu? Pansuanda niuu?	Then do you want to visit home? Are you planning to?
B:	Do darong xii adaguna, dii ne xighaihi nengaa giisa dii. Gan guzhizengshengnagina, pianzi pailaya. Dii kudida sainingi yiu adana dii. Dii durohang jiu xii adaguna. Dii tirga maa sosa, madaa ghula dii ao, fangbian gua dii, njeenaa. Do shangi laodonglada adana zhao.	Not in the near future, since I have got this problem with my legs. They told me after a X-ray that it was hyperosteogeny. I can't even walk well here at home. I guess I won't be able to go visit home at least for some time. It is just so troublesome to get on and off the trains and buses. It is too difficult, not convenient at all, if I am alone. I can't even work well in the fields any more.

A:	Diriigu aaga do Mongghulla kile shdananu?	Does the uncle ⁶⁰ here speak Mongghul?
B:	Shengfang ma? Kilen gua, yanglanda gua. Durahang han ndahgila kileji yanglana. Weinainailanaa dii zisi Mongghulla ghuliana. Dirii Xinjiang ireyaa dii ghulianjin kun gua, do murshdaadiiyaa yanglanda gua zhao.	You mean Shengfang? He doesn't speak Mongghul, doesn't even understand Mongghul anymore. When he was back home, he spoke to us in Mongghul and could speak Mongghul well. Actually he was talking to his grandmother always in Mongghul, but since we moved here, he didn't have anyone to talk to, so he has forgotten all and now doesn't even understand a thing.
A:	Ao, tenkisa aagani duro turiya bai?	Oh, so he was born back home actually?
B:	En, dirii iresa jang wusui haina. Nang do aishiqi wa bai. Dirii ireyaange aishi'ai nianlaja bai tenkisa.	Yes, he was only five when we moved here. This year he is actually twenty seven years old. It's been twenty two years since we moved to this place.
A:	Dii tenkisa ne mulaa xujunsgi yii mudeguna bai?	In that case, these girls don't speak Mongghul either, right?
B:	Zuazhao, nesge dii... Dii surguaghan gua bai. Dirii do jiu bu xigha puxiisa, kan kile gui, kile gua bai.	No, these girls don't even stand a chance. We don't teach them anymore. Who would teach them, it is only me who is speaking Mongghul in this house now. Nobody else can speak.
A:	Ao, naa Jiuye darong yigualani yanglaniisa han saina. Duro Tahalongni Shege Jiuye Mongghulla darong kileji sainai...	Right, then, Granduncle, if you can still understand Mongghul, then it is really good. The granduncle in Tahalong can speak Mongghul so well.
C:	(In Qinghai Chinese Dialect) <i>Naa jiamen zhuangzi li Tumin hai duo bai naa, tuhua zisi fouzhe bai. Zai naomenzi zha hao zai Tumin jiu</i>	Because in his village, there are many Mongghul people. They actually speak Mongghul all the time. But in our unit

⁶⁰ Her son.

	<i>naomen yijiazi a, tuhua zai maorenlia fou bai.</i>	here only our family is Mongghul, so we don't have whom to speak Mongghul to.
A:	Qi tenkisa muxihang kilana bai, hansi?	In that case, you could also speak Mongghul before, right?
C:	(In Qinghai Chinese Dialect) Zai hatouhao jangjiugao fouzheliala, zha laizhao zai maofouzhao bai.	When I was back home, I used to speak Mongghul sometimes, but since we moved here, I can't speak Mongghul anymore.
B:	Dii jang qianglaji iregha shdana, kileji dii shdan gua zhao.	He actually only understands now. He doesn't speak Mongghul anymore.
A:	Ao, tesgi tura yiigu sihoudi, teni kudi dii aanjinii zhao? Ai jiuyesgini?	Oh, when you were back home, where actually were your houses? To which direction from Second Granduncle's house?
B:	Budasgini kudi dii nedahui Shengzhen ghoorlanaa sojasa, ai, jiu tewa bai. Tirii jang ghuraan fan sowa bai. Wu Jiuyehi dii han te yinshandiwa bai. Huoni dii kundi daldi xiighaja bai.	Our old house is actually the house where Shengzhen lives today. We lived in that courtyard for only three years. Your Fifth Granduncle's house was on the other side of the valley. He sold his house later and moved here.
A:	Do duragu Ai Jiuyela Mongghulla kile shdananu?	What about Second Granduncle, does he speak Mongghul?
B:	Do qianglaji iregha shdana. Do jang Tahalongni Shge Jiuye dii Mongghulla ghuliaji saina ya. Dii Shge aagunainai gan ghoorla Mongghulla ghuliana bai zisi. Dii teni San Jiunainai gan Mongghulla ghuliaji hudu saina. Gan Mongghul kunna bai. Dii dura tirii haisi ghuliajin kun gua hao kilen gua bai. Yiguala qidarqilalana bai.	He also only understands. Now actually only your First Granduncle from Tahalong speaks Mongghul very well, because he and your grandaunt speak Mongghul all the time to each other. Dii your Third Granduncle's wife speaks Mongghul very well. She is also a Mongghul. But in that village, she does speak Mongghul often, because no one around can speak.

		Everybody speaks only Chinese nowadays.
A:	Do mushdaaji xiina ao, ndani Hawandida shdan gua maa.	Yeah, people are forgetting their own languages. Actually people in our Hawan village can't speak Mongghul that well any more either.
B:	Do bulaisgi yiila xuexiaodi xiisa qidarla ghuliana bai. Do nena bii mushdaa dii sa saina ao.	Nowadays, children go to school and all started speaking Chinese. Actually it is good that we don't forget these things, right?
A:	Angla, tigiini bii mushdaa diisa, huino xuetangdihang xiisa, youshi yiina ya. Gansge mudesu, aoyao, Mongghul kun yiisa, Mongghulla naa ghulianiisa saina kiji. Bu tirii xinnii, Mongghul kunna, Mongghulni amatigiinge yiihao, yiida mudena kisa dii nigidi xijiighaji. Bu te sihouidi Xining xiiya, Tiwarnida nigidi suraa, dii terog xiaa, Tiwarnida nigidi shdan kisa, kanda saina saina kiji kilena.	Right. We should forget such things, because when you go to later later, this would become an advantage. If other know that you are Mongghul and can speak the language, they will value it, but if you tell them that you are Mongghul and don't know what the language is like, then it is a little intimidating. When I was in Xining, I also learned a little Tibetan. So now when I talk to people at school and say that I also learned some Tibetan, they all say that it is good and it is good.
B:	Budasgi do gharji ireyaa aishi'ai nian xiliu xijia. Dazongtaigharigu aanee yiisa, dirii iresa darong zisi Mongghulla ghulianii, do shihua nigeda gua ao.	It has been more than twenty two years since we moved here. When the grandmother from Dazongtaighar was still alive, she would always talk to me in Mongghul, but now, there really is nobody to speak Mongghul to any more.
A:	Do ndasgini Hawandi ao, shge kunsge darong kanda nigidi ghulia shdanna, bulaisgi do nigidida muden gua dii. Mingxiang,	In our Hawan Village, for example, adults can still speak some Mongghul, but children don't speak Mongghul at all

	Mingwensgi do kanda muden gua ya.	anymore. Mingxiang, Mingwen and others, they don't speak Mongghul at all now.
A:	Yaa, naadii xian nengiya, diinaa huino tesgi ndani kudi iregu dii kao tangxaalaya bai.	Okay, then that is all for now. Let's talk again when you come to our house later.

3. Phone interview with my grandfather

Date: 20 March, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Sengzhang, b. 1945

Introduction and summary of the interview:

Interviewee, Ha Shengzhang, b. 1945, is the author's paternal grandfather. He originally worked in a local coalmine, where he served as a board member and was one of the seven most important decision makers. Having been born in a rural village and worked in a coalmine in the mountains, he always wanted to go out and resettle himself in the city. In the early 90s, he finally managed to have himself transferred from the coalmine to a state-owned firm in the county town. But before he has had enough of the city life, he found himself being laid off by the company that was going bankrupt due to a series of economic reforms and policy changes. With no choice for him to return to the coalmine, which would otherwise have been his career legacy had he not departed in the first place, as said by himself, he moved to Lhasa (Tibet) and engaged in some small-scale businesses. After more than four years in Tibet, in 1999 he moved directly from Tibet to Aksu joining some of his relatives.⁶¹ He became the first person from his native Hawan village that moved to the region of Aksu. He started working as a repairman at the train station. Five years into his time in Aksu, he bought a piece of land and started growing apples. In 2008, he was finally joined by his son and daughter-in-law, the author's parents, who left their house in Hawan unattended.

⁶¹ For more information about his relatives, see interview One and Two.

The author's grandfather started talking about his arrival to Xinjiang in this interview. He then talked about the people who moved there before him and the people he took there himself. As a very common feature of migration in China, people often move from one place to a new place to join their relatives and friends. The author's grandfather moved to Xinjiang to join his brothers-in-law. After finally settling himself down in Kekeya, he encouraged young people from his native village to move there as well. During the last decade, at least one member of every household in Hawan has been there and worked minimally one year. Among them, 8 families have permanently settled in Aksu. These include the families of his own, his sister, daughter, cousins, nephews, neice, grand-nephews and friends. Until 2012, 30 of his relatives originally from Hawan have moved to join him, among them, the author's parents as well. From other families of Hawan village, some people go to Xinjiang every year to do temporary works, e.g., picking cotton, driving and doing construction work. Most of the families that moved there now have either apple orchards, or fields. Some have also bought heavy machinery and engage in construction projects on contracts. One has even turned into a millionaire.

The interviewee also mentioned about other people from neighbouring villages and counties that have moved to Aksu. The villages that exported more migrant workers include Dakeshidan, Xiaokeshidan, Taigar and Aitai villages from Tiantang Town, and also Ledu County and Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County in Qinghai Province. While most of these people are Chinese, there are also quite a few Mongghul people. In Aksu, almost all in-migrants speak only Chinese in social life, since the number of Mongghul speakers are very limited and occasions where these Mongghul people meet are few. The interviewee has also compared Aksu and their home places and pointed out that people would never make as much money in their home places in Tianzhu, since the crops cultivated there are not profitable and heavily dependent on the weather, whereas in Aksu, the mode of farming is very scientific with its sophisticated irrigation and drainage systems, machines, fertilizers and pesticides. Furthermore, since Aksu is a fast growing city, there are many job opportunities available. When he was asked if he wanted to return to his native home region, he replied with an assuring tone that he did not like the idea of having to be buried in a foreign land when he passes away and that he would like to go back to his native land in the coming two years.

A:	Aadee, qi Xinjiang tirii ali nige fan xija dai?	Grandpa, which year did you go to Xinjiang, actually?
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B:	Bu 90 nian, ao, 99 nian, Shiyi yuefen xija bai.	I, in the year (19)90, oh no, (it is) 99, in November actually.
A:	Aadee, qi tesihoudi tengaa jiu zhijie xizangsa ghari xija sa?	Grandpa, actually you went directly from Xizang (Tibet) to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ongla.	Right.
A:	Aadee, qi ghariji xisan tesihoudi ndahgini tiriisa ghariji xisanni kun ulonnanuu quguanna?	Grandpa, where you first arrived there, were there a lot of people from our place?
B:	Te Lianying aadeehgila yi(sh)daa ghariji iresanni yiina, dii gua, niukidi fan do gharjin irejin kun ulon gula hughuawa.	Actually there are those people who came here with your granduncle Lianying, no more than that, but in recent years, there are a lot of people who come here (from our homeplace).
A:	Aadee, nekidi fan do ndahgini tiriisa ghariji xisanni kun ulonna ao?	So, Grandpa, in recent years there are a lot of people coming here from our home village as well, right?
B:	Ndahgini Kurasa ghariji iresanni kun yiixi ulon guajida, Dakushidan Xiaokushidhangsa ghariji iresanni ulonna.	From our Kela village, there are that many, but from our neighbouring villages like Dakushidan and Xiaokushidan, there are many people here now.
A:	Do kilesan ndahgini Hawandisa ghari xisanni da ulonna bai.	Actually there are also a lot of people from our Hawan Village who have moved there, right?
B:	Hawansa dii Yusan ndasgi puxisa gua bai.	From Hawan, except Yusan and us, there are not that many actually.
A:	Ghariji xii, dagonglajin te yigualani suanladiisa ulonna bai na.	But if you count all those who are there for temporary works, for example, construction work and so on, no?
B:	Do Hawansada yiixi ulon gua, jiu Gajira, Gahu'ai ya nehgiwa, Baoshan dai Zhongsan ghoorla zhuangzaijinge awuja bai. Gan ghoorla zhuangzaijinge awuninge Kuche tirii ghajar	(When compare to people from other villages,) from Hawan, there are not that many people lately. Actually, just Gajira, Gahu'ai and these guys. Baoshan and

	tuikiji zenglaji saina bai gansge.	Zhongsan have just bought a shovel loader and are working in the place called Kuche and are doing very well actually.
A:	Aadee, naa Jialong Amani aagunainai liao, Niutu'airagu aagunainaihini suanladiisa ulonna bai na puja nuu?	Grandpa, yeah, but if you just count our relatives from Jialong Ama village and so on, the number of people who moved there are quite significant, you don't think so?
B:	Ao, te yiguani suanladiisa naadii ulonna ya na.	Oh yeah, if you also count our relatives from these neighbouring villages, then there are a lot of them.
A:	Aadee, te yaan te Kuraamani aagunainaisgi kiji ghariji xja dai? Jiuyehgi, Jiuyehgi kisa gan aagunainaihigina.	Grandpa, do you know, when actually did our grandaunts, no, I mean granduncles, from Kuraama move there?
B:	90 nian ghariji ireja bai.	They came here in 1990.
A:	90 nian ao?	Oh, in 1990?
A:	Aadee, ganhgi tesihoudi gharijin xiijin sihoudi zhengfu guliliji yiughajianuu njeenaa xija tirii?	Grandpa, at that time, did they actually want to move there themselves, or the government has encouragement them to move?
B:	Jiu qianylaji saina kiji gharji ireja, ghariji ireja kunnan ghula jiu gerda gua, ghajardira kengkengzinge manta njeenaa nigidi daala palasanghula tingiji soja, yisgi jianchaglana bai, do ne kidi fan saina bai.	Actually many people had moved there already by that time, and the news around our place was that the place was good, but when they actually arrived here, there were nothing, so to speak. They had to dig holes in the ground as living shelters and open up wasteland for growing crops and so on. It was just at the beginning of the development. But these years they are already doing very well.
A:	En. Tirii ghariji xiisan kun Akesu puxiisa dii	Right. Except Aksu, what other places

	aanjima ghariji xiisan kun ulonna?	have people from our place moved to a lot in number?
B:	Akesuda yiina, aanjida yiinai do.	There are a lot in Aksu, actually people have moved to everywhere now.
A:	Beijiang ulonnanuu si Nanjiang ulonna, Aadee?	More people have moved to Beijiang ⁶² or Nanjiang ⁶³ , Grandpa?
B:	Ai Nanjiang ulonna.	Of course there are a lot more in Nanjiang now than in Beijiang.
A:	Bu nang iresa tirihiang yigua nige ujela xiiginii kiji, daiguai kudi ireji.	When I come home this year, I am planning to go to some of these places and take a look.
B:	En.	Okay.
A:	Aadee, qi tengaa ghariji xiiyaange dii Hawandigu kunhgini dugulaji Xinjiangja ghariji xiija sa?	Grandpa, after you have moved there, more and more people from our village and around followed and moved also to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ongla.	Right.
A:	Do tirii ghariji xiisanni Tianzhuni Dakushidan Xiaokushidanni ulonna, dii Tiantangni ulonnanuu ulon gua?	Among those who have moved there from our county, Tianzhu, I know that there are a lot of people originally from villages like Dakushidan and Xiaokushidan, what about people from our township Tiantang? Are there also a lot?
B:	Tiantang tebiira Shangjialong, Xiajialong, Kuraamanida ulonna bai, Shangjialongni ghariji iresan.	From our Tiantang Township, there are from a lot of people from villages like Shangjialong, Xiajialong, Kuraama and so on.
A:	Shangjialongni ao?	Oh, from Shangjialong as well?
B:	Ongla.	Yes.

⁶² Beijiang 北疆: Northern Xinjiang.

⁶³ Nanjiang 南疆: Southern Xinjiang.

A:	Taigaraguni lai?	What about people from Taigar Village ⁶⁴ ?
B:	Taigaraguni Baojani ghoor ghuraan jiazi, diijiu Tangwen na. Aitairagu Li Shoucaisgi ghariji ireja. Shge bulaini tiriwa, mulaa bulaini banki ireja. Aitairasa ghoor ghuraan jazi yiina bai. Wahong kiji tehgiwa bai.	From Taigar Village, two or three families have just moved here, then there is Tangwen's family and so on. From Aitai Village, there are also some families here, for example, Li Shoucai and Wahong's families.
A:	Dii Xuelong liao Zanggan liao tirihangni lai?	Then what about from our neighbouring villages like Zanggan and Xuelong, are there also a lot of people?
B:	Zanggan Xuelong yiixi gua.	There aren't that many people from Zanggan and Xuelong villages.
A:	Aadee, ndasgini tiriisa ghariji xiisan kunsge hindilaa soniuu haisi njeenaa njeenaani ghajardi ghari xiina?	Grandpa, when people from our places move there, do you find a place and live together and you choose different places to live?
B:	Dii aanjida yiina ya, jiu ne kidi xiandira aanjida yiina. Kidi rogdi sojaya. Dii Aksu hao dii baxian yishi wa, aanjida yiina ya.	Actually these people are scattered in all these places here, all these counties. We live in many different places actually. You see, in Aksu region, there are eight counties and a <i>shi</i> ⁶⁵ , so we are scattered in all of these places.
A:	Baxian yishi?	Eight counties and a <i>shi</i> ?
B:	Ai, baxian yishi, yishi kisa Longyishi kiji te, shiliugao tuandui yiina bai.	Yes, eight counties and one <i>shi</i> . This <i>shi</i> is called Longyishi, and it is again composed of sixteen regiments.
A:	Ao, Longyishi tura shiliugao bingtuan?	I see, so there are sixteen regiments in this Longyishi, right?

⁶⁴ Taigar Village: Chagantai Village 查干太村, in Tiantang Township, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province, China.

⁶⁵ Shi 师 = a large military unit or formation usually consisted 10,000 to 30,000 soldiers. More see ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_\(military\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_(military))), last accessed May 12, 2012.

B:	Ai, Longyishi wa bai. Xinjiang yigua aishijigao shi puxjanuu? Jianshe bingtuanna bai. Aksu si Longyishi wa bai. Nige shibura shiliugao tuanchang yiina bai. Shiliugao tuanchangni dii tesihou jiu te jiufangjunsge ghariji ire zhankaagiisanna ya dii, ai dii jianshelaji, Jianshe bingtuanna bai. Yigua aibeisishi wan kun lia.	Yes, it is called Longyishi. Don't you know that there are actually more than twenty <i>shis</i> in Xinjiang originally? And in one of these <i>shis</i> , there are some ten regiments. Actually when the People's Liberation Army came to Xinjiang, they settled and named places after their division names. These soldiers actually involved in the early development of Xinjiang. There are actually around two million forty hundred thousand people then.
A:	Tirii amakiji soja? Ghariji xiisanni kun yidaa sojanuu, haisi Weiqukunla huoladiiyaange soja dai?	Now how do the people moved in and local Uyghur live there? Do those that moved in live together, or do they live together with the Uyghur?
B:	Weiqukunsgela huolasannida yiina. Njeenaa njeenaa ghar pusghaji aanjida soja ya. Ne kidi fan dao jighadisa ser ghujin ulonna ya, gan Xinjiang dai Xizangni zhuakiji saina bai. Iresanni kunsge do ger maa pusghaji zhencesgi do ye hudu saina ya.	There are many people who actually live among the Uyghur. They build houses for themselves here and there and live everything. In recent years, the central government has actually focused on a lot of places like Xinjiang and Xizang (Tibet) and given quite a lot of money so people that move in can build houses and so on. The policy has been quite nice.
A:	Aadee, naadii xiisanni kunsge Xinjiang sainanuu laojadi saina kiji kilena?	Grandpa, what are the people who moved there saying? Is Xinjiang a place better or their homeplace?
B:	Xinjiang saina bai qi. Daibanzi ser zenlajinsge Xinjiangja pudiraana. Xinjiang naa qi jingji laiyuan faamaawa bai.	Of course it is better here. Most people from our place who want to make more money come here, because there many kinds of opportunities.

A:	En, ser zenlajin jihui luanna bai ao? Xijin ghajar luanna bai ao?	Oh, so people have more job opportunities? They have more places to go to, right?
B:	En. Dii ghajarsgeni sainiisa nige fan qi jishiwanjia zenlana bai. Qi laojiadi ser jishiwanja shouwula shidanmuu nige fan?	Yeah. You see now among those who move here, there are many people who can make several hundred thousand RMB here, how can make several hundred thousand RMB in our homeplaces?
A:	Angla ya. Jang tarijin taraanga bai dii shidanmuu. Aadee, ne nige bang kun Xinjiangja zhijie kudinaa banka ghari xiisanni kun ulonnanuu dagonglila iresanni kun ulonna?	Yeah, that is right, in our homeplaces, people can only grow some crops and that is it. Grandpa, among the people who moved there, are there more people who have permanently settled there and more people who come and go and do works like construction work?
B:	Banka ghari iresannida ulonna. Dagonglijinsge nige jiazirasa nige kun gharji iresanni yiina bai. Zhijin banki ghari ire, dura kudinaa do nige kunda guijinni tigiini hudu ulonna bai.	There are more families who have all moved here. For temporary jobs, there are also many people who come here as just the only one from their families. Many people actually move their whole family here and it is now every often that there is nobody in their originally home any more.
A:	Aadee, do te Lianying aadee do Wenxu tirii ganbu danglananuu dangla gua?	Grandpa, what about Granduncle Lianying? Is he still a government official there?
B:	Do tuixiula xija ya, tuixiula liangnian xiliu xija ya. Do zisi guoyuanrananaa wulaolana ya.	He has retired now. It has been more than two years now. Currently he is fully engaged in his apple orchard.
A:	Aadee, naa Xinjiang tirii xisanni Qinghaini ulonnanuu ulon gua?	Grandpa, then are there people from Qinghai in Xinjiang as well?
B:	Qinghai kunsgeni da ulonna. Huzhu liao Luodu	Yeah, there are many people from Qinghai

	tiriihangni. Xiulan aaguni tirii Luodu kun hudu ulonna, shiji jiazi dan yiina.	as well, for example, places like Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County and Ledu County. In your aunt Xiulan's village, there are more than ten families from Ledu County.
A:	Tirii ghariji xiisanni Mongghul kun ulonnanuu?	Are there a lot of Mongghul people who have moved there as well?
B:	Mongghul kun Luoduni yiixi guaji da Huzhuxianni Mongghul hansi ulonna.	Not so many Mongghul people from Ledu County, but from Huzhu County, there are also quite a few families.
A:	Gansge Aksu tirii aanjhang soja?	Where do they live in Aksu?
B:	Jiu Aksu ne nige dao aanjida yiina ya. Mongghul yiixi ulon gua, jiu te kidi jiazi puxiisa, Huzhuxianni qidar yiina.	They are also scattered in all these places in Aksu. But relatively, there are that many Mongghul people here. There are Chinese people from Huzhu County as well.
A:	Do tirii ghari xiisanni Mongghul kun yiisa da, ali Mongghul, ali qidar kiji kileji iregha adaguna ba? Dii yiguala qidarla guleniha?	Even if there are Mongghul people in Xinjiang, we probably can't tell which ones are Mongghul, which ones are Chinese, since they all just speak Chinese, right?
B:	Angla, Mongghulla yiixi gulen gua ya.	Yeah, Mongghul is not spoken much here.
A:	Aadee, dii ghariji xiisanni tiwarsge ulonnanuu quguanna?	Grandpa, what about Tibetan people? Are there a lot?
A:	Tiwar do yiisa da jiu ndasgini tiriiguna ao? Tianzhuni Songshan tiriihangsa iresanni yiisa chuang, dii tirii kilejin qidar ugoni yanglajin jiu diriigu tiwar kunsgi wa ya, nimbaa nuu?	If there are Tibetan people there, I would assume that most are from our county, because they wouldn't have problem with the local Chinese language there in Xinjiang, right?
B:	En, Tiwar dii yiixi ulon gua.	Right, there are not that many Tibetans here.
B:	Muxihang ghariji iresanni kunsge hudu sainiijin	Among those people who came here

	yiina ya. Loufang awugiisanni hudu ulonna ya.	early, there are many who lead a very comfortable life. Many farmers actually bought apartments in the city.
A:	Ao, Aadee, muxi kiduudur Aaba kileji ndasge gerngi pusghagu xijaguna, amakiji pansuandanii?	Oh, Grandpa, just several days ago, Father said that we might need to build ourselves a simple house there, what are the plans exactly?
B:	Dii darong pusgha adaguna, darong serdira aadaguna bai. Dii shdinang tani aabani yanglaojinni jiaokigunii kiji, Zhiqiangni aabani gharsanni aasghuansanni yiwanni harildiwa. Taimeidi Galaolao aasghuaji ghusanni yiwanni da harildiwa. Dii darong yiixi yaan gua bai. Do jiu te nigidi ghajar wa bai. Do daldidiisan sanshiwange daldi shidaguna ya. Daldidiisa bucheng bai.	Actually it is a bit too early still, because we have problems with money now. This year we have just returned Zhiqiang's father the ten thousand RMB we had borrowed from him when we needed to pay for your father's pension. We also returned the ten thousand RMB we had borrowed for your sister's tuition to your uncle Galaolao. So we don't have much left now, except that patch of field, which might worth around thirty thousand RMB, but of course we can't sell it.
A:	Ao, qi kilejin jiu guoyuanni ma?	Right, you mean our apple orchard?
B:	Jiu ghoor rogdiguni daldidiisan sanshiwan shdaguna ya.	I mean the orchard and that piece of land next to it might worth some thirty thousand RMB altogether.
A:	Naadii tesge amahginii kiji maolanii, Xinjiang soginiuu si?	Right. What are actually your plans? Are you all planning to stay in Xinjiang forever?
B:	Naadii tesge kudi iren gua. Do qi yeri maa awugu dii ujeguna.	What else to do if you all (me and my sister) don't return home. I guess we will see when you get married.
A:	Aadee, naadii bu biyelagu dii aanji xiigunii? Xinjiang tirii iregu? Hehe...	Grandpa, where should I go after my graduation here? Should I come to

		Xinjiang? Hehe... (smiling)
B:	Dii qi uje bai. Xinjiang sogu duraalaniisa Xinjiang soguna. Xinjiang saina bai.	That depends on you. If you want to live in Xinjiang, then you can live in Xinjiang. Xinjiang is a nice place.
A:	Aadee, qi xinjiang sogu duraalannanuu? Laojia xiigu duraalanna?	Grandpa, do you want to stay in Xinjiang or return to our home village?
B:	Dii shduala xiisa laojia yii xiisa dii hugu xiisa aanji pulaa gui?	When I get really old, if I don't return home to our home village, where, do you think, should I be buried when I die?
A:	Angla, huinoni kanda laojia xiijinna bai.	Right, everyone wants to go back home eventually I guess.
B:	Dii qi biyelagu dii ujeya bai.	We will see when you graduate.
A:	Aadee, bu diriisa biyela diisa, dan kudi xiigunii kisa, jiangjiu shge hai chengshirahang yii xiisa, ndahini tirii surisan dangxinaa yiixi jari adaguna ya. Hehe...	Grandpa, when I graduate from here, and plan to go back home, maybe I need to go to a bigger city to find jobs, I will probably be of no use with the things I have learned here if I go back to our home place. Hehe...
B:	Dii ujeya bai, aanji xiisa da chengzhi bai.	We will see, actually it is okay no matter where you go in the future (with us).
A:	Aadee, naadii xiandini jiu tigiinga. Qimula nige tangxaalawa juu. Kiduudur liao dii kao dianhua pughaji ireja juu.	Grandpa, let's say that is all for now. It was nice talking to you. I will call you back in just a few days again.

4. Interview with the family of Ha Baoshan:

Location: Hawan Village, Tiantang Town (Township), Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province.

Date: 10 August, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Ha Baoshan, b. 1979

Speaker C: Ha Baoshan's mother, b. 1951

Speaker D: Ha Baoshan's father, b. 1950

Speaker E: My grandfather, b. 1945

Summary:

Interviewee Ha Baoshan's case of movement is special in that he and his brother are both working in Xinjiang with their wives, while leaving their children and parents back home in Hawan. Every year, only one of them goes back home with his wife to reunite with their children and parents during the Chinese Spring Festival, while the other couple stays in Xinjiang and works. They take turns to go visit their children and parents every year.

Before he finally moved to Xinjiang following Ha Shengzhang and decided to stay there, he had also been to Tibet when Ha Shengzhang was there himself, but with no much success achieved there, he was soon forced to come back home and then leave for Xinjiang again. In Xinjiang, he had worked in many different factories before he learned to drive trucks and shovel loaders. These skills qualified him for many job opportunities in construction companies. In 2010, he and his brother bought a shovel loader together and started working on their own signing contracts.

Ha Baoshan's parents stay in Hawan with their two grandchildren aged 8 and 7, respectively. Basically, they took care of everything in the fields, at home and related to the children's upbringing and education.

Just some few years ago, they were still growing wheat, potatoes, beans and rapeseeds in over 8 *mu* of fields in Hawan. During sowing seasons, they either asked for neighbours' help or hired people to help. From their four children (including daughters-in-law), only one, or two at the most, returned briefly in August to help out with harvesting. Ha Shengcai, Ha Baoshan's father, said he could almost handle all the machines used in the village, for example, motorcycles and tractors, and that the work seemed not so difficult. But in recently years, as they grow old into their sixties, such heavy labour work is out of their capacity, so since two years ago, he started experiments in growing saplings in Hawan. At the time of the interview, he revealed that

everything was as planned and if everything turned out right, he would be able to generate quite a moderate amount of money.

When they were asked about their grandchildren, they said these poor children have been much with their parents, especially Ha Mingzheng, the daughter of their younger son. She was born in Aksu eight years ago, but only after eight months, her mother sent her home to live with her grandparents, who have since taken up the role as her “real parents”. In the following eight years, she has never been to Aksu again, while her parents returned home just a few times. Ha Baoshan’s son, Ha Mingjian, had similar experiences when he stopped breastfeeding just seven and half months after birth and his mother moved to join his father in Aksu. Ha Shengcai and his wife said bringing up the children was the most difficult part and the pressure and stress was tremendous. However, they thought that up until that point, they had done a great job with both their grandchildren.

He Shengcai also hoped that his children could eventually return to their home village and spend more time with their families. He always thought that Xinjiang was a good place only for making money and that the best and only place they should lead a life was their native village, Hawan.

A:	Aadee, nang qini nasi amatigiinge gharija, nige kile bai.	Grandpa, could you please tell us what your age is this year?
B:	Liushi silaja bai.	Already sixty four years old.
A:	Yaan jildiwa dai?	You were born in which animal year?
B:	Liuxi jildiwa bai.	It was the year of Rat.
A:	Aadee, qi lai? Haha...	Grandpa, what about you? haha...
B:	Bu nuhuaiwa bai.	I was born in the year of dog.
A:	Nimbanuu? Haha... nasila tenkisa?	Oh, really? Haha... what about your age?
B:	Liushi liuwa bai dii. Haha...	It is sixty six. Haha...
A:	(Qinghai Chinese Dialect) Aanee, naa ni lai? Jinnian suifu amenzigao shaoliao?	Grandma, what about you? What is your age this year?
C:	Nao jinnian 59 bai.	I am 59 this year.
A:	Aaga lai?	What about uncle?
B:	Nao ma? Nao 32 liao bai. Fu yang zi bai.	Me? I am 32 this year. I was born in the year of sheep.

A:	Aaga, qi shihua muxi kiduudur Xinjiangsa booji ireja ao? Qi tirii xiiyaange kidi fanlaja?	Uncle, you have actually just come from Xinjiang a few days ago, right? How long have you been there?
B:	En. Xii diiren fanlaja ba.	Yes, I have been there for four years.
A:	Qi tirii gharjixiiyaange yaanmange warinii?	What all have you been doing there?
B:	Bu tirii dai xiiyaange nige ciliao changdira wariwa bai, dii huino mudi gaikijin tigii changnge dira kidi sara wariwa bai. Dii huino bu jiu zhuangzaiji kaikijinni surija bai, tiriisa dii tirga kaikijinnida surigiwa. Dii jiu nige laobanni ghar dura liangnian duo sannian dagonglawai bai, jiu tirii Aksu.	When I first got there, I worked in a fodder factory, later moved to a timber factory and worked there for several months. And then later I learned how to drive shovel loader and then in Xinjiang I learned also how to drive a truck. After I got my driving licenses, I worked for a boss there in Aksu for more than two years, almost three years.
A:	Dii huino tesginaa zhuangzaijinge awu uu si? Do amatigiinga?	And then you and your brother bought a shovel loader together, right? How is it going now?
B:	Ai, ghuraan fan tigiinge dagongla diijiu njeenaahnaa zhuangzaijinge awuwa bai. Ne kiduudur do Kuche warinii bai. Do zhong lia.	Yeah, after working for more than three years there. We have bought a shovel loader together and now we are working in Kuche. It is all going quite well.
A:	Ao, dii kudisanaa tesge kanhi Xinjiang warinii?	Right, who all from your family are now working in Xinjiang?
B:	Dii yiguala Xinjiang ghari xiija. Kudi dii jang aadee aanee a dii bulaisge wa bai. Dii Zhongsan ghoorla dii yizhi hezuo huobanna bai dii.	Actually everyone from the family has moved to work in Xinjiang now except my parents and the children. Me and my brother, Zhongsan, we have been cooperating always.
A:	Ao, Aaga, tesgi diirenlanaa yiguala huladi dagonglela ghari xiisa dii bulaisgenaa aadee aanee taada tashda giina bai?	Right, Uncle, since the four of you ⁶⁶ are working in Xinjiang, you leave your children back home with their grandfather and grandmother, right?

⁶⁶

The four of you: he and his wife, his brother, his brother's wife.

B:	En, dii aadee dai aanee ghoorladi kaola giija bai, budasge jiu zisi ser zhenlela xiina bai. Naa qi huino kuarisa bulaisge xuetaangdi xiisa, ser hgiliaguna bai.	Yes, actually we leave the children and elders behind and ask the elders to take care of our children, while we are away making money, so the children can go to school later on.
A:	Aadee, tenkisa te ghoorlanaa jiu zisi kudi soji ghajar diragu lesganida te ghoorla warina, kudiguni lesganida te ghoorla warina bai, bulaisgenida te ghoorla ujena bai?	Grandpa, in that case, you and grandma just stay home and take care all of the work in the fields, all the work at home as well as the children, right?
B:	Ai, jiu tai wa bai. Dii buda ghoorlani xiangfa si do bulaisge yiila ghada dagonglela gharji xiisa, buda ghoorla zhulilaji xiangbanfa dii gansge ser nigidi zhenlaji bayangdiya kiji tenkiji maolana bai. Dii gan diiranlani tiigile xiigha jiu zisi ser zhenlela xiigha bai. Dii chuanguangjianghulela xijia ya. Xizangda nige zhuang xiighawa, yiixi saine gua, dii yang Xinjiang xiighawa. Nigidi zhonglia, dii bu kilewa, daikuanmanggeda nigidi daila, dailagu tirgenge awu kiji. Sanshi wu wannagina, sanshiwuwan liao sanshiwuwan awu kiji. Dii yeri ghoorlada tiriwa, zhulilaji, miaohuamange nigidi dugulaji, kudi nigidi lingsui ser nigidi zhenla, te ghoorla zisi jiu te benqianni harila jiu tengiwa bai.	Yeah, just as you said. Our thought was to help our children in some way, so they could go out to look for job opportunities and make some money with the hope that we will be financially better off sooner. Yes, so it is for this reason that we let our sons leave home and have them focus on generating more family income. I have sent them to Tibet for some time as well. It was not too good, so I sent them to Xinjiang and they made some money. Then I said, even if we have to borrow money from the bank, we should buy a heavy machine. The kids said that to buy a shovel loader, three hundred thousand RMB is needed. And then I said even if it is that much, get one. And then their wives went to Xinjiang and also worked on cotton fields to make money to maintain the expenses needed at home and the boys concentrated mostly on making money and returning the money to the bank.
A:	Do aanjida jiu tigiinga bai ao, bulaisgenaa kudinaa yii gii, ser zhenlela yii xiisa, dii bucheng bai ao?	Nowadays it is basically like this, yeah, if young people don't leave their children home with their grandparents and don't go out to make

		some money, it won't work, right?
B:	Yii xiisa, qi diriifhang tiraamange tariji sernge zhenla shdamuu? Dirii han yaanda kaotianchifanna ma, baoxian gua maa. Ai, tengaa dii bulaisgeni yiughadii buda ghoor tiraa nigidi tariji gansgeni bulaisgeni ujeji soja bai.	If they don't go and try to make some money off these fields we have here, how can that be possible? You see, here everything is dependent on the weather. Nothing is ever certain. Yeah, so that is why we sent our children to places far away for better chances and we stay home behind and grow some crops and take care of their children for them.
A:	Angla, dii budasge da tigiinge puja nuu? Ndani aadee da gharji xiiyaange, Aadee, kidi fan xiija dai?	Right, is not our family just another example? My grandfather went there for the same kind of reasons. Grandpa, how many years has it been now?
E:	Shijian xiliu xiija bai. 96 nian Xizang xiija bai, 2000 nian Xinjiang kuriya bai. Bu xiisan te nige fan huoches jang tongkija bai. Dai xiiya huoches zhanra tirge xiukiwa bai, zhuangzaiji liao, huoches liao, diaoches liao, canches liao, wajueji liao tigiisgeni xiukisanna ya. Tenkiji sannian xiiliu xiija. Dii baahala, kudi booji ire, ghariji xiiyaange dii jiu guoyuan awusanna ya kao. 2004 nian guoyuannaa awuwa bai. Nangha zhen banianlaya. Shiga xijuusi wumu wa, mulaani liangmu ban ha, dii qimu xiluu wa ya. Do yiijin jiu te nigidiwa bai. Do jiu tenkiji chongkina bai. Ai, do benqianni harilidiisa nige fan liangwan xiiliu zhenla giisan tigiinga ya. Guoyuannaa daldi xiighadiisa nianian liangwan zhenlana kiji jiu te wa ya. Suanlaiha ye hangzhe lia.	It's been more than ten years. I went to Xizang in 1996. In 2000, I was already in Xinjiang. The year I went to Aksu was the year when they had first had the railway. After arriving there, I started working at the train station repairing heavy machines like shovel loaders, trains, truck-mounted cranes, loaders, grabs and so on. I worked three years there and then I came back home for some time. When I returned, I bought the apple orchard. That was in 2004. It's been eight years now. The apple orchard was in total seven some <i>mu</i> , let me see, 5 <i>mu</i> of the big trees and a little more than two and half <i>mu</i> of small trees. That is all what I have now. Yeah, so we have been spending our lives like that. If I would sell the apple orchard, then it would be something like I am making around twenty thousand RMB a year, excluding the cost, which is not that bad, I think.

B:	Do ndasgini dui dira kileji booji iresa, qi jiu chuangkisanni zui shidiwa, dii boojira ndani bulai diirenlada xiji. Ai, bu kilenii, do kileji booji iresa, ndani diirenlada chuangkisanni saina. Do yiilela nda surina. Laohanjia kudinaa zisi bulaisgenaa idegha uqigha cihoulaji xuetangdi xiigha, te diiren jiu xiahailaji ser nigidi zhenlaji tenkiji dafula ghari xiighasanna ya.	If you take our village for example, you (speaker C) are the first one that went out and started this, and then our four ⁶⁷ have followed you. I think, our four have done quite well too. Today more and more people in our village are following our model that the elders in a family stay at home and take care of the children, send them to schools, while young members in the family migrate from place to place to make money. Yeah, this is why and how I sent out the four from my family after work.
A:	Aadee, naadii te ghoorla ghajarigu lesge, kudigu, bulaisgeni ne yiigualani shdamuu?	Granduncle, then you two have to take care of all the things in the fields, at home and the children, can you manage all that well?
B:	Dii adajinni xiilong yiisa da warila xiina bai. Xueshang bulaini bu maotuola kurigiina bai. Xuruudini hao zaila xiina bai. Yii xiisa, bulaisge mulaa yiisa, huraamange uragiisa, dii weixian ghula. Iresa aaneeni shdaa giina. Shdeji han ganzaosheng pusaa yang shdaaji uqighana bai. Kudi luusaa mangi yiisa, shdeji han uladi miilela xiigu xja. Bulaisge xuetangdi ghari xiisa, dii jiu yeri shdiila xiigu, nenkiji gansge gong pughala ghari xiiyaange jiu ghoorla nenkiji tuikiwa. Do shdaji gua, nasi ghari xijia hao, hehe... Muxi kidi fan bulaisge guisa, buda ghoorlanaa bamu wu ghajarni tarina bai. Ghajarigu, kudigu yaannida buda ghoorla	We have to make it work. Sometimes it is even necessary that we work at night. I send the children to school by motorcycle and go to pick them up in the afternoon. If you don't pick them up, it is so dangerous when it rains for example. When they come home, the dinner will already be ready. Their grandmother cooks it for them and prepares breakfast early in the morning before their can be sent off to school. We had mules, so in the morning I had to take them into the mountains. We two have been living like this for several years, while our children were away making money in different places. But lately, it has become really difficult for us, since we are no longer that young, hehe...

⁶⁷

The speaker's two sons and daughters-in-law.

	waridii shdana bai. Bu sanmaazi kaikinii, maotuo funi shdanii, huladihangda xii shdana. Bulaisge dii hulaidihang gong pughala ghari xiisa, dii kudi hang dii nigiidida gula shdan gua bai.	Several years ago, we two had 8.5 <i>mu</i> of fields and not only did we finish all the work there in the fields, but also the house chores and everything. I can drive the three-wheel tractors. I ride motorcycle, so I had no problem moving around. When the boys were away from home, they couldn't help us with anything that was happening at home actually.
A:	Zhongsā aaga Beijingsa dii zhijie Xinjiang ghari xijia nuu?	Did Uncle Zhongsā go directly from Beijing to Xinjiang?
B:	Beijing Bao'an danglela xijia bai. Kidi fanla dii jiu kudida ireji gua, zhijie jiu Xinjiang ghari xijia bai. Xii sihou daaji gua, jiu kusa huochezhan dira maadai kangladiiwa bai. Tirii maadai rguguni sihoudini dii neni aamaniini teni giija bai. Dii ghoorla tankaagii booji ire jiehunlesanna bai. Ne xjun do kusa basuileja bai. Tirii turigiisanna bai, jang багаууеdira jiu kusa tirii booji ire, buda ghoorladi giija bai. Jang bagao yue hao jiu kusa kuguaghaji gua. Mingjianni turi qigaoban yue gao aamani kusa dagonglela gharixija bai. Ser nigidi zhenlaginii kiji, wawa lianggao naogao a mao za shang ha ya, hehe...	He was recruited and worked as a security guard in Beijing for several years. After that, he went from there directly to Beijing. And soon, he started loading and unloading the trains at the train station. It was there he met the girl's ⁶⁸ mother. They became engaged there and then came back home to just get married and returned immediately to Xinjiang. The girl is now eight years already. She was born there in Aksu and just eight months later, she was brought here to us ⁶⁹ and has lived with us since. Her mother stopped breast-feeding her just eight months after her birth. For Mingjian ⁷⁰ , it was even worse. Just seven and half months after his birth, his mother was already far away from home earning money. For the sake of money, these children can't even enjoy their mother's milk much, (that is

⁶⁸ The girl = the speaker's younger son's daughter.

⁶⁹ Us = the speaker and his wife. The girl's grandparents.

⁷⁰ Mingjian = Baoshan's son. The speaker's older son's son.

		just terrible), hehe...
A:	Aadee, do Xinjiang tirii hang kusa nige zhuan langlaja bai ao?	Granduncle, you have already travelled to Xinjiang, right?
B:	Ai, dii gansgeni gong pughaghaningi gansge da ser nigidi zhenlagiijagina. Bu kilewa, “ghariji iresa nda feijinge sogha,” kisa, “soghaya, ghari ire!” tengina hao, dii huoche dira ghari xii, feijira tingerasa nige zhuan boo irewa bai, haha...	Yeah, they have been working for so many years and said that they had some money and would like me to come visit them in Xinjiang. And then I said, “only if you buy me a flight ticket.” And they said, “we will buy you a flight ticket, so you can fly here.” So, I went there by train and came back home by plane, you know, a journey there and back from the sky, haha...
A:	Zhongsan aagani bu sgeji gui aa do sihou ndaawa. Shiyi nian liao shi’ai nianleja. Aaga, te ghoorla nige fan kudi nige hui ire shdaniuu?	I haven’t seen uncle Zhongsan for a long time. I think it’s been eleven or twelve years since we last saw each other. Uncle, do you two come home at least once a year?
B:	Nige fan nige hui ire shdani. Ao, nang xiisa do yii mudeguna. Nang bu xiisa gan Zhongsandai yeri ghoorlanaa ghoorla booji ireguna dii. Dii lunliulagu xja. Tirii kun guisa da buchengna. Tirgeni tingkighagiisa bucheng bai.	Yeah, I have been able to come home once a year so far. Oh, but maybe not this year, because when I return, Zhongsan and his wife will come home. We have to take turns. There has to be somebody to keep the loader working.
A:	Angla, dii xiisa dii amakiji pansuanda nii?	Right, what plans do you have for the future?
B:	Dii xiahai kaikiji, fan furaagu dii yang nige tirge awugu xja ba. Yijia nige. Dii ndasge han ghada xii shdaguna bai. Zheng ser zhenlajin sihouwa bai.	We have to work hard this year, and are planning to buy another loader next year. We have to have one each. At this stage, we can still go out and it is just the right moment for us to make some money.
A:	Aaga, naadii tesgi te sihoudi amengha Xinjiangja xiiwa zhao dii?	Uncle, why did you decide to go to Xinjiang in the first place?

B:	Dii teni aadee ghari xiija, sainagina. Ndasgini jiu nige nige laapanla ghari xiisanna bai, hehe... Dii teni aadee daudaji ghariji xiisanni dii zisi njeenaani kudigu kunna bai. Hajia kun wa, qinqisge wa bai. Xiiyaange yiila zhonglana. Dii Chagantairigu liao Jialongriguni ghari xiisanni haoshaozi ma.	Didn't your grandfather go there as the first person? He said the place was good and there were a lot of chances. He actually took us there from here one by one, hehe... The ones that your grandfather took there are all from our clan, the Ha clan and our relatives. Now these people are all doing well. Then, many people from Chagantai and Shangjialong followed, and there are many many people there from here and around.
E:	Naa qi Xinjiang zheng kaifalana. Lesge ulonna bai. Ser zhenlajin faamawa bai qi. Qi maola, jang mianhuange dugulela xiisa, sansishi tian dire yiliang wanja zhenlajinni ulonna bai qi. Diriisa gharji xiisannisge daibanzi guoyuan awuji xjuusi ujeji wulaolana bai.	You see, at that time Xinjiang was just about to develop. There were a lot of job opportunities. People make money more easily. Think about it, those people who go to pick cotton in the summer, for just about thirty or forty days, they can make about ten to twenty thousand RMB. Those that moved there from here and intend to stay a long time have mostly bought fields and orchards.
A:	Aaga, qi ne gernaai jijii pusighawa?	Uncle, when did you build this house?
D:	Diiren fan niuu taawan fanlaja kusa. Baosan gernaai jang pusgha jiu yang Xinjiang ghari xiiwa bai. Zhuanghuanglaji yiigualani bu kun yeriji shduulawa bai. Zhongsanni gerni haisi bu pusghaji zhuanghuanglaji tengiwa. Angla, te sihouidi hao dii tigini bu yiigua wari shdan, do dii aadana, paala adana, do shdualaja. Nang tarijin sihouidi kun gulaji tariwa bai. Do huraadilaa dii booji ireguna bai. Nang zhuyao taraa tariwa, dii gaizi simu tariwa, dii xjuusi dai nigidi tariwa. Hawandi kileji booji iresa,	It's been four or five years. When Baosan finished building the house, he immediately went back to Xinjiang. I did all the interior decoration and design. It was the same with Zhongsan's house actually as well. I did all the work inside the house. Yeah, at that time, I could do all the work like this, but not anymore. I can't bend any more, guess I am too old now. This year, when we are sowing, they are not here, so I paid some neighbors to do the work for us. I hope they will come home during

	<p>muni xjuusi gharisanni zui saina. Neni dii toudinian tarinii bai, sidanglanii. Nige xjuusini san mao yiu si mao daldi shdasa, nige fan booji iresa sanwan niuu siwan shdam ba kiji maolanii. Nang ne xjuusisge sainiisa, dii bu fan furaasa siman, qianghuo liao zuoninggen liao songfu tigiisgeni tarigunii dii yaan da yii tari kiji maolanii. Ai, nenkiji xjuusimaa tarihi sainiisa, buda ghoorla kunmange gulaji dirii sosan han kidi fan shdaguna. Bulaisge Xinjiang zisi ser zhenlaji soguna. Baahalagula dirii kudinaa ireguna, dirii sosa saina bai. Kunqi you saina. Xinjiang tirii ser zhenlasa zhongle ma, kun sosan halong gula adaguna. Muni xiangfa jiu tigiinga ya. Ne sihou di do taraa tarihi sernge zhenlagunii kisa, adaguna. Buda ghoorla nige fan yiqian jin taraa idediina, teni nige fan wulaolaguxja. Te nigidi serni gansge nige sara hao kusa zhenladiina. Buda ghoorla yaanda yii wariji kudinaa sososa yang buchengna, lesge wariji shentinaa duanlianlagu xja, hehe...</p>	<p>harvesting season. This year we are growing mainly wheat, some rapeseeds and some saplings. In Hawan, my saplings grow actually the best. But this is the first year we are growing saplings here, so we will see what we can get from them. If we can sell one sapling for 0.3 RMB, I think the income will be around thirty or forty thousand RMB. If the saplings are successful this year, I will be planting herbs and more trees next year. Yeah, if the saplings grow well, then we can still stay at home and work for several years, so the children can focus on making money elsewhere. If someday they can't go on anymore, they can always return home. This is a beautiful place. The weather here is so nice. It is good to make money in Xinjiang, but it is difficult to live in Xinjiang because of the hot weather. Yeah, this is my plan at the moment. Nowadays, it is nearly impossible to make money off planted grains here. Imagine, we two just need 500 kg of wheat to survive, but we have to spend the whole year to get it. Kids make that much money in a month. But if we two don't do anything at home, it is not good for our health, hehe...</p>
D:	<p>Diriihang sosa sainaya. Ghajarni do tiitian tuikidiya, yaan warisada fangmianna bai. Dii buda ghoorla kusa yanglao baoxiannaa lingkinii. Shdualasanni kandida yiina bai. Nige kundi nige zhaizi yii bai. Nige sara liuqishi pughaji ireghana bai. Do teni aadee darong</p>	<p>It is really good to live here now. They have already made terraces for us. It is easy and convenient to work in the fields now. Plus, we are already receiving pension now. Every person has a bank account and every month, they send us sixty to seventy RMB per person.</p>

	lingkiji guisa, nige fanni lingki shdaguna. Haha...	If your grandfather has not withdrawn his money yet, he automatically has a year's pension in his account already, haha...
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5. Interview with Yang Decang

Location: Third Garden Unit, Kekeya Management Station, Aksu Branch of Tarim River Management Bureau, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region⁷¹

Date: August 1, 2011

Speaker A: Ha Mingzong

Speaker B: Yang Decang, b. 1965.

Speaker C: Ha Shengzhang, b. 1945.

Summary:

The interviewee, Yang Decang, is a native of Xiaokeshidan village⁷², a neighboring village of Hawan. In 1996, he sold his house, fields and everything in Xiaokeshidan and moved to Aksu in Xinjiang after his parents-in-law. Never had he imagined that some parts of Aksu were totally undeveloped and that he and his family would have to start from utter scratch, to find a place to settle down first and then try to get something to do all the time as labourers to make ends meet at home. Facing the fear of having to go back home unsuccessful, like many others who moved there with him, he literally has done all kinds of work he could name for, and as one of the many who moved into Aksu during that period, he has contributed his part in the early development of the region known to the Uyghur as *Kekeya*, or the “barren/arid land”, into “the land of fruits” famous across China. He talked about how the development carried out in the 80s and 90s has turned Aksu from a small town in the Gobi desert into an oasis and its environment when they built irrigation canals and planted trees. The extreme hardships that they have experienced exceed beyond our imagination. At the end, hard work has paid off, and he got the

⁷¹ In Chinese: 新疆塔里木河流域管理局阿克苏分局柯柯牙管理站园林三队.

⁷² Xiaokeshidan 小科什旦, a village in Tiantang Town (Township), Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu province.

land he had struggled for and was able to support his son all the way to the university despite of the expensive tuitions in-migrants had to pay due to registration issues. He now has more than 500 *mu* of land growing different economic crops such as cotton, pears, plums, apples and jujubes. He said most people who came early and were able to survive those difficult years have got what they deserve and lead a very comfortable life. A life they couldn't have had had they stayed in their home place in Tianzhu.

He also revealed that he has been in close collaboration with the local Uyghur and thinks that most Uyghur are extremely hospitable and friendly people. Many people from our home place have got married with Uyghur girls and their children grow up speaking both Uyghur and Chinese and adopt interesting customs. For instance, some of these children even eat pork, which is uncharacteristic of their mothers' culture.

The interviewee is also very well informed about the educational and economic policies drawn up for the region. For example, the central government has already enforced the bilingual education policy and also planned to turn the city of Kashgar into a special economic zone like Shenzhen in China.

A:	Uncle, firstly could you please tell me your age and place of origin?
B:	I am 36 ⁷³ this year. Originally, I am from Xiaokeshidan, Tiantang Town, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province.
A:	Right. When did you move here? Why and with whom?
B:	I moved in December 1996. There were several other people that came with me that time, but they didn't manage to stay here return home soon after. I was the only one who sold everything, including my house, and moved the entire family here and didn't plan to go back, even from the beginning. My wife's parents had moved here before us, let me see, that was in 1990, so we came following their footsteps.
A:	Right. What was it like when you first came?
B:	My goodness, at that time, there was nothing here. There were only twenty six households in this unit. Now there are one hundred sixty households. This big road (asphalt paved) now here was very small and there were stone about this big everywhere on the road. The road

⁷³ The interviewee made a mistake about his age. According to ensuing conversations he should have said forty-six.

	<p>that leads to this village was covered in dust which was about this thick. When we first came, we didn't have any registration, so local official would always come check us out. It was hard to find someone from our home-place. Now there are so many, we can get around with our native dialect without any problems here. If you happened to meet a fellow from Kouli⁷⁴, it was more emotional than you meet a relative today.</p> <p>When we first came, it was so difficult to make money. If you were lucky and could get some work somewhere, you were paid only about 15 RMB per day. I was once working in a contruction site for several months building one of the tall buildings in the city centre, but at the end of the project, we didn't get any payment. The boss just ran away and was nowhere to be found. Workers got blisters all over their palms. I also learned how to drive here. I did all sorts of works here. I fed pigs. I opened up new areas for planting. You know those years, when I had dreams at night, I was always back in our home place, but in the mornings when I opened my eyes, I hated to realize that I was still in Xinjiang.</p> <p>When we had to open up the land here, it was so hard because of its high alkaline content and so on, even heavy machines had problems, and we only had hand tools. Here in this place, we have experienced all kinds of hardships. We came almost empty handed to a place where there was nothing. We have literally built this place and it is because of us, the earlier ones who moved here, Aksu has become what it is today. I don't know if you have been there already, but here in Kekeya, there is a park. The land in the park hasn't been opened up and touched much by people, and in there they have kept the original land features of Aksu. If you see that, you will understand what we have done here. We have completely changed Kekeya from a barren gobi desert into an oasis, and it is now known for its fruits all over China. Do you know what "Kekeya" means? "Kekeya" is actually Uyghur, in Chinese it means "bu mao zhi di".⁷⁵</p>
A:	Yeah, it is really amazing what people can do.
B:	You see, when we first came here. The weather was horrible. There would be sand storms well over half of the time in a year. You couldn't go out. You couldn't see things just several meters away. And under such conditions, we lived in cellars covered by tree trunks and

⁷⁴ Kouli = mouth-LOC. Certain Xinjiang residents use *kouli* to refer to places outside Xinjiang, or places east of Jiayuguan/ Jiayu Pass, which is the first pass at the west end of the Great Wall and was a key waypoint to Xinjiang and on the ancient Silk Road.

⁷⁵ Bu mao zhi di 不毛之地 = barren land.

	things. Compared to those days, today's <i>Kekeya</i> is heaven on earth. Because of the trees we have planted, sand storms are seldom seen now.
A:	Right. What about children's education then? Your child was born in Tianzhu, right?
B:	Yes, he was born in Tianzhu and came here when he was about five. Since we were not registered here, as in-migrants we had to pay much more for the children's education than local people. From kindergarden, I had to pay 1,500 to 1,600 RMB a semester for my son's education. When he was in middle school, the tuition rose to 2,500 RMB, and 3,600 to 3,800 RMB in high school every semester. That excludes accommodation and food. The Nine-year Compulsory Education policy hadn't been enforced at that time. Children's education is the most important task for us parents. Even if you don't have enough to eat, you have to send your children to school.
A:	In about how many years after your arrival were you able to buy your own fields?
B:	Oh, you didn't have to buy fields at that time. If you gave them a deposit, you would get a piece of plantable land as contractors. But even like that, people were not willing to own land, because there was no profit and the investment was too high. There was no yield from the fields at that time. People didn't have money and couldn't buy food. I actually lived near a fellow friend from our home-place. Once his family ran out of flour, so we went to the flour factory to borrow some. After waiting for a whole day, he came out and said, "I can't get any flour. They wouldn't lend me any." I then made a joke saying, "We had a pretty decent life back home. Why did we come to this god-forsaken place?" And then he just started crying.
A:	What about now? How much land do you have? What things do you grow?
B:	Now I have about twenty <i>mu</i> here in Kekeya, where we grow pears, jujubes, and apples. And then I have about 500 <i>mu</i> of cotton in another county. Most are contracted to others. Every year they give me 70 kg per <i>mu</i> as a contract fee.
A:	Wow, you are a big landlord here. I heard that the rich people here are mostly farmers.
B:	Haha... but there are so many more people who have more land here. Yeah, it's true. The real rich people here are farmers who have a lot of land. They have the best apartments in the city center. I don't think even people working in the city like in banks would be able to afford that. Now more and more people want to buy land, but its price has gone so high lately. In early years, no one wanted to buy land for 300 RMB per <i>mu</i> even. But the price

	increased dramatically in the following years. From 300 RMB, it rose to 500 RMB, and then 1,000 RMB, and then 3,000 RMB, and later 8,000 RMB, and then suddenly to 15,000 RMB, and now for one <i>mu</i> of land here in Kekeya you have to pay 30,000 RMB. No one can afford to buy fields anymore. For example, your grandfather bought ten <i>mu</i> with just 7,500 RMB in 2004, but if someone wants to buy it from him now in 2011, he wouldn't get it without paying at least 300,000 RMB. So those who came early and have land now are all doing well. They all have cars and apartments.
A:	Do you still go visit your home place?
B:	Yes, I go there once in a while. It is not that difficult any more. At that time, when we came, the railway was still not in use, so we had to come to Ku'aile first by train. It took us about five days and five nights. And then by bus from Ku'aile to Aksu, it took two more days. A single trip took about a week. But now there's a direct train from here to Tianzhu, so it's really convenient.
A:	When you all moved in, what was the situation like with the local Uyghur?
B:	They had the fields divided to them already from the People's Commune period. ⁷⁶ They had apricot, apple, and walnut trees. They also grew winter wheat.
A:	What has communication with the local Uyghur been like?
B:	With the language, it is like Tibetan in our place. We have had problems understanding each other. Many people that moved here early actually learned to speak Uyghur, and Uyghur have picked up Chinese pretty quickly recently. Uyghur in the city and near the towns don't have problems communicating with Chinese any more. From two years ago, the government has invested a lot in bilingual education here. When I first came, I was in close contact with the Uyghur for about six years. They are very hospitable and clean. Their notion of saving water and things is much better than ours. That's probably because they lacked water historically.
A:	Is there intermarriage between the Uyghur and the people from our place?
B:	Yes, quite a lot, I would say. The interesting thing is that some of their children grow up eating pork, haha... Actually many people from our place have married Uyghur girls. Some have even gone back to Tianzhu with their Uyghur wives. Even in your Ha Clan, there is a

⁷⁶ The People's Commune = an administrative level in rural areas of the People's Republic of China from 1952 to 1985. Later, these communes were replaced by townships.

	<p>man who married a Uyghur. It's amazing that these Uyghur women can make noodles on a board only this big for some ten people. You know we would have to use a very big board, haha... Actually Uyghurs are very friendly if you get to know them. They are not like what you hear on TVs. Those people are only a few.</p> <p>Have you been to Kashgar?</p>
A:	No, not yet, but I would like to go see Kashgar.
B:	<p>Oh, my goodness, why haven't you visited Kashgar yet? They say, "If you haven't been to Xinjiang, you don't know how big China is, and if you haven't been to Kashgar, you haven't been to Xinjiang." Now the plan of the government is that they will turn Kashgar into a special economic zone like Shenzhen. The slogan is "There is Shenzhen in the east, and there will be Kashgar in the west." You should go to work in Kashgar when you return. There are so many foreigners.</p>
A:	Haha... that is actually a very good suggestion. I will definitely think about that.